

Highfield Children's Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector

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Setting address

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Type of setting

Childcare on non-domestic premises

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

The provider must provide a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must provide a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Childcare (Inspection) Regulations 2008 regulations 9 and 10).

The setting also makes provision for children older than the early years age group which is registered on the voluntary and/or compulsory part(s) of the Childcare Register. This report does not include an evaluation of that provision, but a comment about compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Register is included in Annex B.

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Description of the setting

Early Years @ Highfield day care (formally known as Highfield Children's Centre) opened in 2006 and is registered by Ofsted on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. The centre comprises of day care and children centre services. Day care is for children from two to five years and runs each weekday for 50 weeks of the year from 8.00am to 6.00pm. A maximum of 24 children may attend the day care. Of the 64 children on roll currently, 21 receive funding for nursery education. The day care also offers childcare for parents accessing the children's centre. The day care supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language. The accommodation is suitable to cater for children and adults with disabilities. The day care is the linked provider for the children's centre. The children's centre team supports parents and carers and offers a variety of courses and multi agency drop in and support groups. The centre caters for children from birth to eight years with a maximum number of six places for children under two years within the children's centre. It also arranges regular visits from health visitors, midwives and commissioned services. There are two family support workers and a first steps worker who work closely with all staff and settings within the centre. All services are housed in a purpose-built building with a secure, enclosed outdoor play area for the children. A steering group oversees the operations of the centre. There is an overall centre manager. She is supported by a management team which includes the day care manager, lead nursery teacher and family support co-ordinator. There are nine staff who work with children in the day care. Of these, all hold appropriate early years qualifications.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

Overall, the quality of the provision is outstanding, maintaining the same high standard as at the last inspection. Care for the children is at the heart of everything the setting does. It is fully inclusive of all children and matches activities very closely to each child's abilities and interests so that they make very good progress. The relationship with parents is very strong, a typical comment being, 'we are so lucky to have such a wonderful setting on our doorstep'. Because leadership is excellent and self-evaluation accurate, the setting has an outstanding capacity to improve further; parents sum it up 'the staff always want to do more'.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the high quality early years provision the registered person should consider:

- plan more opportunities for activities to enrich children's grasp of mathematical language.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Care is a very high priority in the setting and this contributes strongly to the confidence children have in all they do. The key person scheme is used very effectively so that children and parents have a person to look to for any particular help they need. Parents talk about the strong relationships fostered with their children and themselves. Trust is very high and parents feel able to talk to staff with any problem or concern. The setting is managed superbly. For example, when new staff join induction is thorough and comprehensive so they immediately know where they fit into the team, what is expected of them, and what they can expect from others. Health and safety is excellent. Paperwork is impeccable; thorough, meticulous and comprehensive. Safeguarding children is a high priority and all staff are suitably checked.

The excellent staff team works very closely together so each session flows smoothly and every minute is used productively. That the provision is outstanding is partly because all have a very strong commitment to their own development, constantly looking to improve and update their knowledge. They observe each other and share good practice. This is beneficial to children's learning because there is a real sense of ambition and a constant drive for improvement. Very clear management structures ensure the setting runs effectively. All available resources are deployed very well. Staff skills and expertise are used very effectively, every role or responsibility seems to have just the right person leading. The staff and parents are included in shaping the future of the setting, drawing on their ideas and ensuring they feel part of developments. There is a real sense of moving forward and driving improvement together.

Assessment is used very effectively. Staff make very useful observations of any significant points in children's development. This information is then used to plan next steps in learning. An excellent balance between planned activities and children's spontaneity ensures tasks closely match children's abilities and interests, so a very good rate of progress is maintained. Every child is considered as an individual and their activities tracked so they experience a full range. Whether a child struggles or has a particular gift or talent, the activities match their needs closely. Parents rightly state that staff start from children's interests then 'encourage children to do things they don't naturally do'. Links with the nursery are superb so that learning is extended and reinforced, particularly for those children who attend both.

Relationships with parents are outstanding. Typical comments from parents include 'we feel very lucky to have found this day care centre'. Parents' evening and discussions focussing on learning journeys are both seen as very beneficial. Parents feel fully informed about how their children are progressing, and able to support their development at home. They can describe the very good progress their children are making, particularly in their language skills and imaginative play.

The setting is fully inclusive, staff have a very strong commitment to promoting

equality of opportunity and attending to children's diverse needs. The children's centre team is seen as particularly helpful in supporting children and families to access learning and other services. Very positive relationships with families foster close and meaningful links. The very high quality provision includes several sessions to meet the needs of particular groups and enable children and families to thrive. Parents say staff are 'always reaching out to us'. When children join the setting, they and their parents are given just the right amount of support and parents feel 'All About Me' is particularly useful preparation. Equally, transition to the nursery is very smooth because it is carefully organised; staff in both settings ensure children are prepared fully.

The quality and standards of the early years provision and outcomes for children

Children settle very quickly because they are happy to come to the setting, knowing how positive relationships are between their parents and staff. Parents state that the setting is 'very friendly, very welcoming'.

An excellent range of activities gives children many interesting challenges and opportunities. They have a real sense of enjoyment of learning which bodes well for their future. They are curious and interested, most with a thirst for learning. Many are beginning to explore writing, forming letters carefully. They join in readily with the actions and repetitive lines of a story. Festivals, such as Diwali are brought to life by exploring art and food with parents. The development of basic skills prepares children exceptionally well for the next stage in their education. Activities are relevant and interesting, so children develop an awareness of their environment and turn lights off and check the recycling bins. Parents talk about how they come out of the setting enthused by all that they have done and learnt, 'when I pick her up at the end of the day she always has loads to tell me'. Children are very imaginative in their play. They sustain interest in the world they are creating and enjoy role-playing everyday situations, such as the farm shop that followed their visit.

Many sensible initiatives benefit children's development greatly. For example, a list of 'entitlements' outline the teaching children should receive. Staff successfully meet this criteria, for example, in how they challenge children to think by asking probing questions. Concerns about children are often recorded on 'individual support plans' which usefully bring together the views of parents, staff and the child, and outline how these needs will be met. The children's centre team is particularly skilled at putting children at the heart of the process and bringing together necessary support agencies so that real benefit can be seen.

Children have very positive attitudes and this is beneficial to their learning. They feel safe and secure, the good 'family feel' helping them to gain confidence. They sustain concentration very well and persevere with interesting tasks. They are generally very cooperative with one another. Staff plan activities that encourage children to socialise and play together. Parents remark upon the improvement since children joined the setting in their ability to be part of a group, and how well they are being prepared for nursery. Children are independent and very confident

in making choices because of the strong relationship with their key person. They know they will be given all the opportunities they want to explore and investigate new challenges. Equally, they know if they want some help, they will receive it. Good staffing levels help make this possible. Children have a good understanding of what being healthy means. They wash their hands before eating healthy and varied snacks. Children's independence is enhanced as they pour their own drinks and cut their own food. Safety is explained very well and reinforced by visitors, such as fire officers and police. In the setting, too, everyday hazards are discussed so children begin to understand that some actions may have a consequence for them or their friends. When children build a high tower, staff will ask 'how can we build this safer?'. High quality language provision is everywhere. It is closely linked to everyday activities so children experience a setting rich in language opportunities that are exploited very effectively by staff. However, mathematical development is not as strong. Although specific activities, such as cooking gingerbread men, give a wealth of opportunities equally well used; these are much rarer occasions and children are not acquiring the mathematical language to support their development.

Children do well and make very good progress partly because the link between assessment and planning is strong. Staff check children's progress and record significant developments. They use this information to plan next steps so that what children are offered is closely matched to their stage of development and interest. Parents remark that their children 'come on in leaps and bounds'.

Activities are as interesting outside as they are in, because accommodation is excellent and staff plan imaginative themes. Working with parents to grow fruit and vegetables at an allotment has now been extended to a raised bed in the garden. Children enjoy the activities outside and use their imagination well, such as when building an aeroplane and flying 'overseas'. Parents rightly remark that staff are skilled in working alongside the children and asking questions that help them extend their imagination and reasoning skills.

Annex A: record of inspection judgements

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	1

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	1
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding	1
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	1
The effectiveness of partnerships	1
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	1

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	1
The extent to which children feel safe	1
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	1
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	1

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Annex B: the Childcare Register

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are:	Met
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The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are:	Met
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