

Horsmonden Kindergarten

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector

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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

Horsmonden Kindergarten opened in 1980. It is a committee run group operating from a purpose built hall in the village of Horsmonden. Children are cared for in two rooms which are able to be opened out to form a larger space when required. There are also toilet and kitchen facilities and a fully enclosed outdoor play space.

The kindergarten is registered on the Early Years Register and both the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register but is currently only providing a service for children in the early years age group. A total of 42 children from two to under eight years may be cared for and there are currently 69 children, from two to five years, attending on both a full and part time basis.

The group opens Monday to Friday during term time with morning sessions running from 9am to 12 noon. Lunch sessions are also offered followed by an afternoon session from 1pm until 3.30pm. Details of changes to session times and any planned holiday provision is advertised in advance.

The setting welcomes children with special educational needs and/or disabilities as well as those who speak English as an additional language.

There are currently nine staff employed to work with the children. Of these, five hold appropriate early years qualifications and two are working towards a qualification.

The setting is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance and receives support from the local authority advisors.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

Children have tremendous fun as they play and learn in the safe, inclusive and wonderfully inspiring environment. They thrive as a result of the extremely high level of attention given to identifying and addressing their individual needs. Competent self-evaluation enables the staff to successfully identify areas for improvement and promotes ongoing improvement resulting in a service which is constantly evolving to meet the changing needs of its users. Positive partnerships with parents and carers along with effective communication with other professionals support the staff to provide co-ordinated and consistent care.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- consider ways to ensure that the exceptionally high level of encouragement

given for children to use their imagination and to express themselves freely is consistently offered for all adult instigated activities that are aimed at producing displays or gifts to be taken home.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children's safety and wellbeing is highly prioritised within the kindergarten. Robust recruitment procedures ensure that children are cared for by staff who are fully vetted and appropriately trained. One of the group's two managers takes lead responsibility for co-ordinating child protection concerns although all qualified staff have undertaken training to enable them to identify the potential signs and symptoms of abuse. Clear written policies outline the procedures to be followed should staff have any concerns. Staff very successfully balance safety with children's need to develop independence. Risk assessments clearly show how risks are managed to enable children to take part in activities which offer a good level of challenge. As a result they are developing a range of skills whilst learning how to keep themselves safe.

The committee and staff team work extremely effectively together creating a positive, efficient and totally child centred atmosphere. Ongoing reflection and self-evaluation takes place and is used very effectively to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the group. This enables the managers and staff to make changes and refinements, large or small, which reflect the changing needs of the children and their families. For example, a range of well thought out changes has been made to the organisation and presentation of the group rooms and outdoor area. This has been done as a result of an increasing focus on creating 'friendly spaces' following a recent training programme. These alterations have been highly effective in engaging children's attention and promoting calm, focussed and sociable play.

An excellent commitment to creating friendly, open relationships with parents and carers results in a wonderfully positive environment where all adults are well informed. An attractive and information packed notice board is fitted in the entrance hall and a white board is used to display details of the activities the children have enjoyed during the day. In addition each child has their own book which is used to record and share information about their individual progress. These are very effectively used as a contact book to travel between the setting and the child's home. They contain written observations as well as the next steps identified for each child. They are beautifully illustrated with photographs and examples of children's work and are highly individualised which encourages parents and carers to contribute comments, photographs and observations from home. The kindergarten also recognises the importance of maintaining good working relationships with other professionals involved in promoting the care and development of the children. Arrangements are in place to liaise with others who are providing the Early Years Foundation Stage to the children attending in order to share information. In addition, the management and staff team have considerable experience of working alongside health professionals and local authority advisors.

The fully inclusive ethos within the setting results in systems and working practices which are aimed at identifying and addressing the needs of all children. The building is fully accessible to wheelchair users and staff are trained to care for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The setting also has effective strategies in place to work with children and families who have English as an additional language. Children have access to an extremely good range of toys and resources which reflect positive images of diversity including dolls, books and puzzles. They take part in a range of activities which help them to understand and respect the different lives, customs and beliefs of people from throughout the local community and the wider world. These include Chinese New Year, Diwali and a range of Christian and pagan festivals.

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

Children are making excellent progress in all areas of development and are extremely enthusiastic and independent in their learning. They are given an outstanding level of support and encouragement by staff to investigate and explore their environment. Children are wonderfully well behaved and sociable, chatting happily with their friends and with the staff. They confidently move around the setting selecting from the very impressive range of resources on offer.

Staff have a thorough understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage and are extremely skilled at extending children's enjoyment and learning. They use sensitive observations of the children engaged in their chosen activities to plan for their next steps. Clear and efficient recording systems help the staff to monitor children's progress. Effective communication between staff ensures that they are all fully familiar with each child's individual needs and are able to adapt activities to offer the appropriate amount of challenge.

Children all around the setting can be seen engrossed in charming games and activities either on their own or with friends. Staff recognise the importance of allowing children to experiment for themselves but are also prompt to act to offer support where appropriate. For example a child was observed sorting a very large pile of small figures by colour, carefully lining up the different colours. She was concentrating extremely well for a long period of time. Having checked that she was happy to be playing on her own and would not rather join in a story session, a member of staff praised her efforts, reinforcing how clever she was being. Every single member of staff who entered the room took time to stop and offer praise and a warm smile and finally to photograph her success. This ensured that the child felt part of the group whilst choosing to undertake the activity on her own. This level of care and attention is given to every single child at all times, whether they are painting, engaging in role play or asking for help to set up a camp. Staff are extraordinarily patient, calm, focussed and good humoured. This creates a wonderfully harmonious, positive and inclusive environment in which children's efforts are acknowledged as wholeheartedly as their successes.

In addition to playing freely with the resources, children are also offered a choice

to take part in a range of adult instigated activities. These are generally exceptionally well presented and successfully engage the children's interest. On very rare occasions a little too much direction may be given for craft projects such as planned wall displays or making gifts to take home. However, overall the focus placed on encouraging children to use their imagination is outstanding. Children have constant access to creative activities such as painting, gluing and sticking. There are examples of wonderful individual and expressive artwork displayed throughout the kindergarten. In addition, children engage in enchanting, and often complex, role play games and confidently make up song, rhymes and jokes to share with their friends. Children also make very good use of the thoughtfully designed outdoor play area. They engage in physical activities such as climbing, playing ball games and using ride on toys as well as art and craft, reading, number work, role play and investigating the natural world.

Children are very well supported to understand the importance of following healthy lifestyles. They are developing excellent self-care skills. They visit the toilets independently and routinely wash their hands after using the toilet and before eating. Snack and meal times are wonderfully sociable but well managed occasions. Children enjoy nutritious mid-morning snacks and those staying all day bring in packed lunches from home. They confidently discuss which foods are good for them and which should be considered treats. Drinks are constantly available for children to access independently. Appropriate procedures are in place to care for children who become unwell and also to administer medication if necessary. First aid trained staff are present at all times ensuring that children can be treated in case of a minor accident.

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

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

Met