

St. Philip Howard Pre School Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspection date	20/05/2010
Inspector	Jane Richmond
Setting address	St. Philip Howard School, Woods Avenue, HATFIELD, Hertfordshire, AL10 8NN
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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

St Philip Howard Pre-School opened in 1990. It operates from a classroom within St Philip Howard School in Hatfield and has access to the school's outdoor play area. The pre-school serves the local area.

There are currently 58 children from two to under five on roll. The setting may cater for no more than 26 children at one time. The majority of pupils are in receipt of government funding. Children attend for a variety of sessions, either morning, afternoon or all day. The setting currently supports children for whom English is an additional language.

The group opens five days a week during school term-times. Sessions are from 9.00am until 12.00pm and from 1.00pm until 3.15pm. These two sessions are linked by a lunch club.

Three full-time, four part-time staff and one volunteer work with the children. Over half the staff have early years qualifications to NVQ Level 3 and all the other members of staff are currently working towards this. One member of staff has qualified teacher status. There are two mentors who are NVQ assessors in the school.

The setting receives support from the local authority. The pre-school is working towards the Herts Quality Scheme. The setting works in close partnership with the school in which it is sited.

The setting is registered on both the compulsory and voluntary part of the Childcare Register.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

The setting meets the needs of the early years children well by providing a stimulating, well organised, caring environment in which the children thrive. The leadership team is committed to continuous improvement and there are currently some good procedures in place to enable this. The setting currently caters for children who are learning English as an additional language and the needs of all children are well provided for within a rich and inclusive environment.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- update self-evaluation methods so as to implement more rigorous self improvement procedures.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

All procedures are in place to ensure that children are safe from harm. There are rigorous systems to ensure that children only go home with known adults and access to the setting is controlled. Staff members are checked for their suitability to work with children and they are well trained to recognise symptoms of stress. There are links with agencies to support families and all health and safety regulations are adhered to. Equality is promoted well through the key worker system and all staff take responsibility to ensure that the children's needs are identified and addressed. Opportunities to celebrate diversity are taken through activities which celebrate the variety of cultures within the setting. For instance, a volunteer has been recruited to support the language development of children for whom English is an additional language. There is a wide range of resources available, which creates a stimulating and enjoyable learning environment. These resources are regularly changed and updated to link to the planned topics. A good level of staffing ensures that children are well cared for and inspired to learn from the activities provided.

The leadership and management of the playgroup have a very strong commitment to the welfare, learning and development of the children in the setting. They have acted on previous recommendations to make improvements and carry out regular reviews of the progress and development of the children in their care. Through careful planning, evaluation and discussion, their understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage framework has developed well and this has had a positive impact on children's ability to make progress and their preparation for entry in to the neighbouring nursery class. The leadership team positively approaches the challenge of continuous improvement and acts on advice, however, they now need to be more rigorous in their self-evaluation methods by seeking the views of others and using their own records to identify where children may not be progressing so well.

Partnerships at the setting are good. Parents are very pleased with the setting's provision because it is welcoming, children want to come and the staff are very supportive of any child with special educational needs. Information for parents, both before they take up the place and while their child attends, is accessible and they are frequently invited to join in activities and see their child's records and progress. The group has well established links with the school in which it is sited, and has contributed to the planning and provision in the outdoor area and staff attend joint training sessions.

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

Children's welfare is considered of paramount importance. They are encouraged to develop good attitudes towards hygiene, there is regular liaison with parents and carers regarding children's needs and anxieties, health and safety standards are upheld and children's social and emotional needs are effectively cared for. Through

a range of activities and external visitors, children are taught about how to look after themselves, for instance, they learn about road safety procedures when out on the road, and the importance of keeping well when eating healthy snacks.

There is a good balance between child-initiated and adult-led activities which develop children's sense of independent learning. During child-initiated activities, adults discretely ask questions and engage in conversation to enable further learning. The very good activities in the outdoor play area enable children to develop a high level of skill in their understanding of the world, for instance, this term's topic on growth encourages children to have first hand experience of ducklings, tadpoles and frogs, plants, seeds and fruit. Singing, talking, drama, reading and role play activities all provide children with a range of opportunities to develop literacy skills. Numerical skills are developed through a variety of shopping activities, comparing heights and lengths, looking for shapes in the environment and to engage in counting activities. The large outdoor play area enables children to explore and develop their physical skills and to develop the confidence to engage with older children from nursery and reception classes, while indoors cutting and pencil control activities develop fine motor skills. Children learn about what is good and what is not acceptable through adults' responses to their behaviour and learning to share and respect others. Their spiritual development is enhanced by daily prayers and access to the woodland area and the 'peace garden'. Through focussed observations, incidental recording of children's responses and photographic evidence, key workers and the leadership team successfully map children's progress and identify what they have achieved and areas where they need to develop further.

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?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	2

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	2
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding	2
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	3
The effectiveness of partnerships	2
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	2

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	2
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	2
The extent to which children feel safe	2
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	2
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	2

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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