

Hillside Pre-School and Early Learning Group

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector	Anne Mitchell
Setting address	Hillside Road, Verwood, Dorset, BH31 7HE
Telephone number	01202 820679
Email	
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

Hillside Pre-School and Early Learning Group opened in 1992 and operates from a new, fully accessible modular building with two playrooms and associated facilities. The pre-school is committee-run and has close links with the school. The children have access to fully enclosed outside play areas. It serves families from Verwood and the surrounding villages. The pre-school is registered on the Early years Register as well as the compulsory part of the Childcare Register. A maximum of 40 children aged from two years may attend at any one time. There are currently 82 children on roll and, of these, 71 three- and four-year-olds are in receipt of funding for nursery education. The pre-school supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The pre-school and breakfast club opens five days a week during school term times from 8am until 3pm. A total of 18 staff work directly with the children. Of these, 15 hold relevant qualifications in early years.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

Children's individual needs are very familiar to staff, enabling them to plan relevant and meaningful activities, tailored to each child's unique needs. This supports their learning extremely effectively overall, and ensures that all children meet their full potential. Overall, children make significant progress in their learning and development given their starting points. Systems to rigorously monitor, assess and guide the provision are highly effective and rooted in extremely positive partnerships with parents, children and others. This results in the pre-school having an excellent capacity to maintain continuous improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- developing the outdoor environment further to offer children more freedom to explore, use their senses, and be physically active and exuberant.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children's safety and welfare is paramount. All staff have completed safeguarding training. They demonstrate a secure and confident, knowledge and understanding of safeguarding procedures and know what to do if they have concerns for a child's welfare. Rigorous and robust, vetting and recruitment procedures check that adults working with children are suitable to do so. There are close links with the school ensuring they work in partnership to protect children. Parents are provided with clear information about the pre-school's duty to keep children safe. Regular

risk assessments are completed by staff to check all areas are safe and secure. Supervision is very good and staff are highly skilled at engaging a small group of children while maintaining a watchful eye on the rest of the room.

All staff, committee, parents and children are involved in the evaluation process, including contributions to the Ofsted self evaluation form. The views of parents and children are included through parents' questionnaires, regular discussions and the 'ideas box'. Visits from local authority staff also provide opportunities for staff to review their practice and develop further skills. The pre-school staff have successfully met the recommendations from their last Ofsted inspection. The move to newly built premises has given staff and children the scope to develop the provision, providing free-flow indoor and outdoor play and increased personal independence for children. However, the outdoor area is not used to its full potential for supporting more active learners. Staff are dedicated and committed to improving outcomes for children through continued training, as well as reading and research. Staff work successfully together providing a friendly, yet dynamic environment for children to learn and develop. A key strength of the pre-school is the commitment and dedication of the management and staff. They strive to provide a safe and emotionally secure environment where children of all abilities flourish and meet their full potential.

Well organised documentation effectively supports children's health and safety. Clearly written policies and procedures are shared with parents from the outset. Policies are reviewed and updated regularly to reflect current legislation and practice.

The pre-school staff liaise closely with the feeder school, with visits to reception class and from teachers at various times throughout the year. This helps children make the transition between pre-school and reception without stress and anxiety. Contact books are used between the pre-school and other early years' providers that some children attend, including childminders. This ensures a consistent approach to the child's care and education and so activities and themes between settings can complement each other. There are excellent links with local Health Visitors and other professionals providing support for children and their families as required. Children with additional needs are expertly supported and fully integrated into the pre-school. Close liaison with parents and professionals ensures all children receive the best learning experience.

Parents are welcomed warmly into the pre-school. Their views are actively sought on a regular basis on activities and daily practice. They complete an 'All about me' document with their children from the outset, providing details of children's progress to date and their interests and enthusiasms. They keep staff informed of any key developments at home, which are added to the child's development records. Parents say they are delighted with the level of care and education their children receive. They are very impressed with the staff's commitment to ensuring children enjoy their time at pre-school. Parents state that they receive high quality information about the setting and feel very involved. A mother observes 'Staff are enthusiastic and very proud of the children. It makes you feel very secure to know your children are in such good care'. Parents are eager to be involved in many aspects of the setting. A parent with gardening skills provides staff with

information about how to grow vegetables, and plants for a sensory area, volunteering to provide practical help.

There is a very high staffing ratio to ensure children are well supported and supervised, both inside and out. Equipment and play resources are of high quality and are well maintained. Because staff are good role models, children treat the equipment with care. Posters and resources reflect cultural diversity and children enjoy looking at the photographs of themselves and their friends displayed on the walls. Multicultural books and dolls reflect the wider world and skin-tone crayons ensure that children begin to learn about, and respect differences. Children learn about sustainability through use of the recycling bin for foods. The environment is bright and welcoming with some resources set out ready on tables and some in cupboards where children may choose for themselves. They are confidently independent and happy to search cupboards for their preferences. Children's work is displayed, supporting their self esteem. Photos of key activities such as snack-time, outdoor play and the toilet facilities enables children to show staff what they need, if communication is limited.

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

Children demonstrate high levels of confidence and self-esteem. Because they are happy and settled, they are highly motivated to learn. A three-year-old child is completely absorbed, concentrating closely on a complex number puzzle chosen personally. The child finds the correct colour and number with care and interest, checking frequently by counting the hoops. The child appears to relish solving the problem independently. A member of staff keeps her distance, allowing the child time and space to complete the puzzle to personal satisfaction.

Children are engaged by staff in stimulating discussion. They play with 'fake' snow and animals that live in cold climates. They talk about where the animals live and what they eat. This prompts discussion about what the children enjoyed in the recent snowy weather, using language to imagine and recreate roles and experiences. They quickly recall how the snow felt, the games they played and the snowmen they built and saw. The member of staff introduces mathematical language as a matter of course. 'How big was it? Was it bigger than yours? How deep was the snow?' This is true throughout the pre-school as staff continuously and spontaneously use open-ended questions, so helping children problem solve and think for themselves. They take every opportunity to use positional and mathematical language in every day activities, effectively supporting children's learning.

All children have full access to outdoor play throughout the session. They enjoy raking the leaves and building tall towers with large blocks. Staff take full advantage of spontaneous opportunities for learning. Children watch the building work, talking about how the digger works and where the gravel will go. Children participate eagerly in physical activities outside playing basketball and balancing on the stepping stones.

A broad range of innovative activities and resources are available for children to explore and staff are always on the lookout for new and exciting play opportunities. Children make cupcakes from small malleable beads that stick together and can be modelled and manipulated. 'Goo' made with grated soap and water provides an interesting 'goosey' substance for children to explore.

Children enthusiastically help to tidy up in time for circle time as they make a circle, joining hands and singing their circle song. Staff and children sign familiar songs such as 'Baa baa black sheep' and 'Twinkle, twinkle little star'. All children participate well, smiling and clapping as each new song is chosen.

Children's knowledge and understanding about their own health and safety is expertly supported. They help prepare healthy snacks by cutting the bananas in half, and segmenting the apples. They use tools safely under close supervision. A child tells the inspector, 'I didn't cut myself because I used it carefully'. Children spontaneously wash their hands independently after using the toilet and before snack. They clearly understand why they need to do this, saying, 'To stop the germs going in your tummy'. In the toilet area, a child uses the soap dispenser with one hand and rinses the soapy hand under the tap. Another child reminds them 'You need to wash both hands to keep the germs away'. Children complete their own risk assessments in the outdoor area. They identify possible hazards in the garden, including behaviour and actions that may cause accidents and these are displayed around the garden. Consequently children learn about their own welfare and that of others through being actively involved in the safety of their environment. Visits from the fire department and the school crossings officer support children's knowledge and understanding of fire and road safety.

Planning is clearly displayed and effectively informed by regular observations, children's interests and parental input. There is excellent balance of adult-led and child-initiated play, both inside and out. Children's developmental records provide a clear picture of their ongoing progress highlighting any areas for development. Plans and activities are regularly evaluated to ensure they meet the needs of all children attending and that children are fully included. Because staff know children in their key group so well, they are able to plan relevant and meaningful activities, tailored to each child's individual needs. This supports their learning very effectively and ensures that all children meet their full potential, narrowing the achievement gap between less and more able children.

Children's behaviour is impeccable. They are well mannered and show genuine care and concern for their peers. Older children help the others to learn, explaining what to say if you want to share, and helping them into their chairs. Staff are excellent role models treating children and one another with kindness, listening to each other with genuine interest, providing an atmosphere of mutual care and respect.

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

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	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:

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