

Highwoods Early Years Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number 318094
Inspection date 01/02/2011
Inspector Andrew Clark

Setting address Highwoods Road, Mexborough, South Yorkshire, S64 9ES

Telephone number 01709 587327
Email admin@highwoods.doncaster.sch.uk
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

Highwoods Early Years Centre was registered in 1992 and is run by a committee. The setting operates from a dedicated classroom and office area, within Highwoods Primary School in Mexborough, Rotherham. Children have access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area. A maximum of 23 children aged under eight years may attend the setting at any one time. The setting currently takes children from two to five years of age. There are currently 41 children on roll who are within the early years age range, of which all are in receipt of funding for early education. The setting is open Monday to Friday from 9am to 12 noon and from 12.30pm to 3.30pm term time only.

The setting supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and also supports children who speak English as an additional language. The setting is registered by Ofsted on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register.

There are five members of staff, who work directly with the children. All staff, including the manager, hold a qualification at level 3 in early years and the manager is currently working towards a Foundation Degree. The setting receives the support of the local authority.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Highwoods Early Years Centre is an inclusive setting and everyone, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, makes good progress in their learning and development. Children enjoy a wide range of play opportunities, both indoors and outside, which generally cover all aspects of learning well. Outcomes for children are good, with excellent priority given to ensuring children's safety and well-being. The experienced manager is well organised and provides clear leadership. Most staff are well trained and enthusiastic in their roles. There is an outstanding partnership with parents and, overall, the setting has a good capacity for continuous improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- review systems to ensure all staff work collaboratively within the setting to share knowledge, question practice and test new ideas by monitoring their interaction with the children
- develop further the use of the outdoor area to create a 'number rich' environment and provide a wide range of number resources to encourage children to be creative in finding and solving problems.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Procedures for safeguarding and to ensure all staff are suitable to work with children are outstanding. Staff training for all aspects of protecting children's well-being is very regularly evaluated and refreshed. The setting has robust recruitment and vetting procedures in place. The setting has extremely rigorous policies and procedures to monitor children's safety at all times and the promotion of children's welfare is central to the setting's work. There are excellent procedures for the administration of medication and recording accidents and injuries. All records are very well maintained and securely stored.

The efficient organisation of the setting contributes well to the children's welfare and the progress they make. The manager sets a clear direction and has high expectations. As a result, staff are reflective and ambitious for the setting. They have good levels of qualifications for their roles and are keen to build on them. Self-evaluation is accurate and generally well informed by the views of staff, parents and carers and children. Regular staff meetings provide good opportunities for sharing of experiences. However, systems to ensure all staff work collaboratively within the setting to share knowledge, question practice and test new ideas by monitoring staff's interaction with the children is less well established. The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Staff are well trained and efficient in identifying any barriers to children's success, such as speech and language difficulties, and drawing on their own skills and those of specialist support agencies to overcome them. As a result children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those who speak English as an additional language are fully supported and included in all activities.

There is an outstanding partnership with parents and carers and they are extremely enthusiastic about the care and support the setting provides for their children. They receive regular and extensive information on their children's progress and ways in which they can support their learning at home. These are always presented in an attractive way and successfully encourage parents and carers to contribute fully to their children's learning. There are many excellent opportunities for parents and carers to improve their own knowledge and skills through training sessions. For example parents and carers attend sessions on play and story sacks.

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

Regular observations of children's progress are used well to meet individual needs. Children are very independent and quickly develop excellent levels of self-confidence. Staff make very good use of vibrant and exciting resources, including information and communication technology, to promote learning and to engage children in decision-making. Children's positive contribution is outstanding as a result. The setting encourages children to have a sense of adventure and children move freely between challenging activities indoors and out. For example, they love

being 'Bob the Builder', working with hammers and nails in the tool shed. Children feel extremely safe and learn how to handle equipment in practical application. They have an excellent understanding of safe and unsafe situations and respond very well to clear rules and guidance. Children are inquisitive and enjoy exploring the natural world. They plant, dig and harvest simple crops in the garden areas and clearly enjoy themselves. Many visits in the local community and regular visitors to the setting enrich their learning. Children's literacy and numeracy skills are promoted well through songs, puzzles and games. Many opportunities for early writing and counting skills ensure children take pride in writing letters, plans and invitations. The very good use of labels promotes early reading skills. These skills prepare children well for the future learning; although the creation of a number rich environment in the outdoor play area to encourage children to be creative in finding and solving problems is not fully established.

Adults participate well in children's role-play to increase their understanding, but occasionally they do not question children closely enough to extend their vocabulary. Children celebrate a number of religious and cultural festivals and a good range of toys and other resources promote positive images of the diversity of their world. The development of healthy lifestyles is outstanding. Staff are well informed and trained about food hygiene. The independent 'snack bar' ensures children are fully involved in deciding upon and making their own snacks. They wash their hands before eating and wash their pots afterwards. Water is constantly available. There are excellent opportunities for children to climb, roll, run, jump and dance. There are well planned areas for children to relax and pursue quiet activities during their busy days. As a result of the good quality of provision the needs of individual children are met well.

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

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	2
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding	1
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	2
The effectiveness of partnerships	2
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	1

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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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	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	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