

Highfield Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number EY341221
Inspection date 07/03/2011
Inspector Ann Austen

Setting address The Pastures Community Centre, Welford Road,
Kingsthorpe, Northampton, Northamptonshire, NN2 8PN
Telephone number 01604 842184
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

Highfield Playgroup re-registered in 2006 and operates from The Pastures Community Centre in the Kingsthorpe area of Northampton. The premises are on one level. Children are cared for in the community centre hall and have access to a secure, enclosed outdoor play area. The playgroup is open each weekday from 9.15am to 12.15pm during the school term only.

The playgroup is registered to care for a maximum of 24 children at any one time. There are currently 37 children on role. The playgroup is in receipt of nursery education funding and is able to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those for whom English is an additional language.

The playgroup employs six members of staff. Four members of staff, including the manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications. One member staff is working towards an additional qualification. The nursery receives support from the Local Authority.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children are cared for in a welcoming and inclusive environment where they are happy, settled and make good progress in their learning and development. Policies and procedures are effective and inclusive for those children who attend and as a result no child is disadvantaged. The safeguarding of children is given high priority. Strong partnerships are well established. Parents and staff understand the importance of developing relationships with other providers and services to promote the integration of care, education and any extended service. Self-evaluation is used to evaluate practice and to identify areas for improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- develop further systems to ensure that reflective practice continues to identify strengths and priorities for development and that the targets set to achieve continual improvement are effectively implemented
- develop further the range of resources and activities provided in the outdoor play area and improve the range of numerical displays within the whole environment.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Arrangements for safeguarding children are robust. This ensures that children are well protected and given high priority at all times. Staff understand the indicator

signs of abuse and the designated person is conversant with the procedures to follow to report concerns. She has attended relevant safeguarding training. All required policies and guidance procedures are in place. Vetting and induction procedures ensure that all staff are thoroughly checked and suitable before they have unsupervised access to children. Risks of accidental injury are minimised during indoor and outdoor activities because staff supervise the children well and carry out regular risk assessments of all aspects of the provision. Consequently children are able to move around the setting safely. Security within the pre-school is a priority. Secure procedures are in place in relation to the collection of children by appropriate adults and the monitoring of visitors. For example, visitors are requested to produce their identification and asked to sign the visitor's book. Staff have up-to-date first aid knowledge. Clear procedures are in place to record and monitor any accidents and for the safe administration of medicines. As a consequence children's health and well-being is well promoted.

Staff have appropriate qualifications, participate in appraisals and are committed to developing their performance and professional development. They are enthusiastic, act as positive role models and work hard to ensure that the service provided is responsive to the needs of the children and families who attend. Written policies and procedures are in place, reviewed regularly and effectively reflect the ethos of the setting. For example, assessment records which reflect the children's progress and policies, such as, equal opportunities and behaviour management, are in place. Self-evaluation is used to evaluate the provision, identifying strengths and areas for development. Although to date some objectives are still to be fully implemented in practice, for example, the development of the outdoor area. Recommendations raised at the last inspection have been met. Resources to promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice have now been purchased. These provide young children with opportunities to appreciate our similarities and differences as they play. And children have improved opportunities to access further resources for themselves.

Staff promote an inclusive environment. All children are treated with respect and as individuals. They receive attentive care and engage in purposeful conversation which enables them to flourish. Staff promote children's personal, social and emotional development very well. They are deployed effectively so that children have one-to-one attention as required. They enable children to move spontaneously between the indoor and outdoor environment. Resources are fit for purpose and able to support children's learning and development. However, systems to further develop the range of resources and activities provided in the outdoor play area are not fully implemented in practice.

Staff form strong partnerships with parents and carers. They develop a good shared knowledge of the best ways to meet each child's individual needs. For example, parents' views about their child's needs and interest are sought when they children join the group. This enables staff to initially build on what is already known. Parents receive information about the setting and regular newsletters. An effective key person system helps parents and children to become familiar with the provision and to feel confident and safe within it. Daily discussion, open evenings and social events enable staff to talk to parents and provide opportunities to discuss their child's achievements and well-being. Staff actively encourage parents

to become involved in their children's learning. For example, parents borrow books to share with their child, are encouraged to help them learn new songs and to identify different shapes in the environment. A 'working together' communication book enables parents to share observations of their child at home. Positive written comments from parents' feedback questionnaires and thank you cards show they value the staff and are happy with the service provided.

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

Children play, learn and have fun in the company of their friends and adults at the pre-school. They demonstrate a positive attitude to learning and are offered a variety of play opportunities that support them in making good progress towards the early learning goals in relation to their capabilities and starting points in their learning. Staff observe the children as they play and make assessments of their learning and development using the Early Years Foundation Stage guidance document to plan children's next steps.

Staff form warm, caring relationships with the children and support their learning. They build on children's ideas and ask relevant questions to extend their knowledge and skills. As a consequence children are happy and enthusiastically learn through their play. Children learn to take responsibility and are developing their independence, for example, children learn to dress for outdoor play, independently select their snack and pour their own drink of milk. Children communicate with growing confidence, ask questions, show an awareness of the listener and are developing their listening skills; for example, during circle time. Children enjoy stories, look for their name card before sitting down for a snack and make marks as they draw and paint. Older children are beginning to associate sounds with letters and are developing their emergent writing skills. Children are learning to count and solve simple number problems. They complete puzzles, learn to recognise different shapes, play number games, such as, dominoes and fill different sized containers with water to learn about volume and capacity. However, the range of numerical displays within the indoor and outdoor environment is limited. This reduces opportunities for children to recognise and use written numbers as they play.

Children explore imaginarily as they paint, learn to differentiate different colours and use a variety of materials in their collage work. For example, children mix colours together to notice how they change. Children use their imaginations when they play with small world resources, such as, the cars and they act out real and imagined events. For example, children pretend to visit the library, take their pets to the vets and book a holiday at the travel agents. Children sing, dance and play musical instruments. Through a range of first-hand experiences children are beginning to develop an awareness of the natural and made-made world. For example, children play in the snow, plant sunflower and tomato seeds to learn about growth, visit a local supermarket and collect conkers and leaves on autumn walks in the park. Children enjoy visits from the local police support officer and make lanterns to celebrate the Chinese New Year. The computer and pre-programmable resources, such as, the remote controlled caterpillar and traffic

lights are effectively used to support to support children's learning.

Consistent routines and good adult interactions help young children to feel safe and secure and develop a sense of security and confident in the setting. They seek support, reassurance and comfort from the staff as they need it, which promotes their emotional development well. Children are developing an understanding of how to keep themselves safe, for example, they learn how to cross the road safely and not to talk to strangers. Behaviour is well managed; the children respond to gentle reminders or corrections, learn to share, take turns and develop good manners.

Children are cared for in a clean environment and learn to keep themselves healthy by adapting good personal hygiene routines. For example, children know that they wash their hands after using the toilet which helps to prevent the spread of infection. Children's dietary health is maintained because records of any special food requirements are kept and staff are knowledgeable about children's dietary needs and provide accordingly to this. They thoroughly enjoy a range of nutritious snacks, for example, raw vegetables, fresh fruit, cheese and crackers. Children are encouraged to try new foods and help to prepare their own snacks. For example, they make fruit smoothies and pizza. They know they should take in fluids as a way to maintain their health and have access to water from a covered jug. This ensures that children remain comfortable and well hydrated throughout the session. Children are developing skills in coordination, control, manipulation and movement. They combine and repeat a range of movements as they balance on the beam moving forwards, backwards and turning around. Children jump and hop in the hoops and weave in and out of the cones. They have fun as they bounce on the small trampoline, manoeuvre wheeled toys, crawl through tunnels, climb on the climbing frame and move their bodies to music.

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	3

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	3
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	3
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