

Heather Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number 113519
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Inspector Janet Thouless

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Type of setting Childcare - Non-Domestic

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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

Heather Playgroup opened in 1978. It operates within the grounds of North Heath Primary School, in Horsham, West Sussex. Children have access to a large room, toilets and an enclosed outdoor play area. The setting serves the local community. It operates from 9am to 1pm Monday, Tuesday and Friday, 9am to 2.45pm on Wednesday and 9am to 12 noon on Thursday during term time only. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting also offers a drop in session for parents and children each Monday afternoon in partnership with the local children's family centre.

A maximum of 24 children may attend the setting at any one time. There are currently 19 children aged from three to under five years on roll, some in part-time places. The setting currently supports a number of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. This provision is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register.

There are seven members of staff. Of these, five hold appropriate early years qualifications, with one working towards a relevant early years qualification. The setting is in receipt of funding for the provision of free early education to children aged three and four and receives support from the local authority.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children and their families are warmly welcomed into a friendly child-orientated setting. The established staff team work well together to meet children's needs and promote their welfare. Children are progressing very well in most aspects of their learning and development. Strong and positive partnerships with parents and other professionals, together with practitioners' very good knowledge of children's individual needs, ensure that there is continuity in children's care and learning. The setting has a clear sense of direction and gives utmost priority to self-evaluation, continuous improvement and opportunities for training and development.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- develop the presentation of mark-making resources in the writing area

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children are fully safeguarded as practitioners have a good understanding of their role in protecting children and the procedures to follow in the event of a safeguarding concern. All required documentation, including policies and procedures, is comprehensive, reviewed on a regular basis, maintained to a high standard, ensuring the setting successfully operates on a day-to-day basis. All practitioners are appropriately vetted, they routinely verify all visitors and are vigilant about the safe arrival and collection of children. Thorough risk assessments of the premises and before any outings help keep children safe. Policies and procedures are shared with parents to ensure they are fully aware of how the setting operates. These robust measures help safeguard children's welfare. Management and the staff team make effective use of self-evaluation to help identify strengths and priorities for future development to improve the quality of the provision for all children. Continuous professional development is promoted as some practitioners are working towards higher level childcare qualifications. This positive approach reflects the settings commitment to drive and secure improvement.

The setting demonstrates a firm commitment to promoting inclusions and the environment promotes diversity positively. Posters, photographs and resources reflect images of culture, disability and gender. Resources are plentiful, well maintained and attractively presented so children can access them independently. However, the presentation of mark making resources does not always make them look inviting to children. Practitioners are experienced in providing care for children and are committed to ensuring all children are welcomed and included. Children have good opportunities to make choices and decisions about what they do, supported and guided only when required, as practitioners are extremely skilful at identifying when this is necessary.

The setting is passionate about working in close partnership with parents and other professionals. There are extremely well-established channels of communication between parents and partners which successfully promotes children's learning, development and welfare. Parents receive an abundance of information about the setting. Regular newsletters include informative information on the importance of how children learn through play which relate to specific activities on offer. Through the use of questionnaires parents and children's views are sought and any comments or suggestions are positively viewed and addressed by the setting. There are highly effective systems in place to support children who have various needs. The setting ensures children receive the support they need if they have special education needs and/or disabilities by liaising closely with inclusion advisor, speech and language therapist, portage co-ordinators and health visitors which contribute to children's development.

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

All children make good developmental progress in the well organised and resourced environment. Their progress is clearly observed and recorded in individual Learning Journeys which are shared with their parents and carers on a regular basis. Practitioners have a good knowledge of the Early Years Foundation Stage framework and provide a range of activities based on individual children's interests and levels of attainment. They carry out observations which help them to get to know children better. They then use these to plan for the next steps in children's learning. This ensures children have appropriate challenges in line with their individual needs and interests. A good balance of adult and child initiated activities are included in the planning which ensures a wide range of experiences are included which are of interest to the children. Children are confident, inquisitive and show a great desire to explore because of the excellent levels of care and education provided by the setting.

Practical activities arouse children's natural curiosity and develop their exploration skills. For example, children take great delight in mixing dough and all the measuring, mixing, and discussions involved. They ask questions and use appropriate language such as how many, how much and 'what do we do next'? Practitioners ask more able children to describe how the flour feels 'It's soft and fluffy' 'It's wet and sticky' comes their reply. To support children's understanding of keeping themselves safe practitioners explain the dangers of placing the dough in to a hot oven and why only adults may do this. We might burn our fingers come the many replies from children. Many children are confident in expressing their thoughts and ideas and enjoy listening to their favourite story such as aliens. Practitioners introduce prompts such as items of clothing to bring the story to life to further engage children's interests. At circle time and through role play practitioners help the children to accept each others differences and encourage them to understand each others feelings.

Children have good opportunities to be creative and to practice their early writing skills in finger painting, shaving foam and corn flour. There is a good range of resources freely available for children to make their own pictures and experiment with art and craft materials. They cut ribbon with scissors and explain to each other that they must hold the scissors down to keep each other safe. They punch holes in paper and thread ribbon through each hole and make monsters and aliens from recycle resources. Numeracy and problem solving consistently form part of the children's daily activities. Children build with large blocks in the outdoor area counting how many they need to build a wall around themselves. They go off to fetch a see-saw and balance the blocks stating 'we need one more to make the see-saw go down.' Children confidently use the computer, printer and digital camera and various electronic resources thus developing their skills in information and communication technology.

Children's physical development is promoted as they pedal bikes and cars along painted roadways using their skills to manoeuvre around obstacles and stopping to let children cross the road. They work out how they can attach a trailer to a bike,

working collaboratively together. Good behaviour management strategies are in place which helps children to understand the importance of working harmoniously in the setting. Children are given gentle reminders about appropriate behaviour. For example, we must walk, what might happen if we run, we might fall. Children learn about leading healthy lifestyles as they participate in an extensive range of activities which actively contribute to their good health and wellbeing. They access outdoor play daily in all weathers which supports their good health. They recognise when they are thirsty and help themselves to water from suitably sized jugs. They show consideration to others by offering friends cups of water. Healthy snacks, eaten sociably together at the table, as well as routinely washing their hands, help children develop good habits for the future. They plant a range of fruits and vegetables, such as carrots, potatoes and strawberries and make potato salad and fruit smoothies to enjoy at snack time. These positive early experiences provide children with a good start in life to enable them to develop the skills needed for their future success.

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	2
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	2
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

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	1
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	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