

Heath Barn Pre-school

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector	Fiona Robinson

Setting address	St. Leonards Heath & Reach VA Lower School, Thrift Road, Heath and Reach, LEIGHTON BUZZARD, Bedfordshire, LU7 0AX
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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*.

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Description of the setting

Heath Barn Pre-School has been established for 40 years and re registered at St Leonard's VA Lower School in April 2011. It is committee run and operates from a purpose-built, single storey building set within the grounds of St Leonard's Lower School in the village of Heath and Reach, in Bedfordshire. The pre-school has the use of a securely enclosed outdoor play area, and the outdoor environment of the host school. It is registered by Ofsted on the Early Years Register. There is provision for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those who speak English as an additional language.

A maximum of 24 children aged between two and the end of the early years age group may attend at any one time. Currently there are 37 children on roll, all of whom are in the early years age group and of these, 29 are funded. The pre-school is open each weekday, term time only, from 9am to 3pm. Children come from the local area and attend for a variety of the sessions on offer.

There are seven members of staff who work with the children. Of these, one is a qualified teacher, two hold National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) at level 4 and one of these is working towards an Early Years Foundation degree; two hold NVQs at level 3 or the equivalent; one holds a NVQ at level 2 and is working towards a NVQ at level 3; and one holds a NVQ at level 1. The pre-school receives support from the local authority.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children enjoy a wide range of interesting activities and experiences and achieve well. They benefit from outstanding partnerships between parents, the host school and outside agencies because information and support is shared very effectively. Children behave well and staff are skilled at increasing their understanding of keeping healthy and safe. The manager and staff have a good knowledge of the pre-school's strengths and areas for improvement, such as the development of the outdoor area. They demonstrate a good commitment to continuous improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- extend opportunities for children to explore and investigate their natural environment
- develop the layout and organisation of the outdoor area to provide more opportunities for planting, growing and sensory experiences.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children's safety is protected well because staff have a good awareness of safeguarding and child protection issues. They implement comprehensive policies and procedures to ensure children's safety. Risk assessments are carried out daily to ensure children's safety in the indoor and outdoor environments. Collection procedures are rigorous and followed carefully by staff, parents and carers. There are robust systems in place for staff recruitment and adults who work with the children are vetted to check their suitability. Evacuation procedures are practised regularly to familiarise children with the routine. Staff are vigilant at supervising the children to ensure their safety both indoors and outdoors. Children are provided with a good range of resources and equipment that are safe and suitable for their age.

The pre-school is well-led and managed and there are good self-evaluation systems in place which ensure that improvements have a positive impact on the experiences of the children. The manager and staff take the views of parents and children into consideration when identifying areas for improvement. They meet regularly as a team and there is a good, shared commitment to develop the pre-school in its new purpose-built premises. There is a clear idea of the areas for improvement, such as improving children's skills in communication, language and literacy, and increasing resources in technology. Staff make effective use of resources to meet most of the needs of the children. Currently, the layout and organisation of the outdoor grassed area does not provide enough challenge to develop children's planting, growing and sensory experiences. Planning indicates that opportunities are sometimes missed to develop their problem solving skills while exploring and investigating the wooded area in the outdoor environment. Staff actively promote equality and diversity with good levels of support for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, so that they make similar progress to their peers. Activities are regularly monitored and evaluated and staff work hard to enrich their existing qualifications and experiences.

Partnerships with parents and carers are outstanding. Feedback indicates that staff are very caring, approachable and enthusiastic and that communication is excellent. They are very appreciative of regular opportunities to share their children's achievements and progress and enjoy looking at their learning journey booklets. Staff compile comprehensive newsletters and the parents' notice board and website keep parents fully informed of special events and activities. Parents and carers are very supportive of special events and fundraising activities, such as the Christmas pudding and Christmas card sales. The relationship with the host school is excellent and the children benefit from the use of the outdoor area. Staff liaise regularly with outside agencies who provide excellent support and advice for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

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

Play is interesting, well-organised and purposeful and children achieve well. Staff value their ideas and interests and incorporate these into the planning and organisation of activities. Themes such as Ourselves, Animals and Transport enrich children's experiences. Staff evaluate their planning carefully and use the information gained to help children build on their existing skills. Children behave well because staff have clear expectations and are very good role models. They have a consistent approach to managing behaviour. Children take turns on the computer, share play resources sensibly and show respect for one another. They respond well to reminders about caring for each other and respecting the rules and boundaries which they helped to compile. Staff and parents help them to appreciate their own and other cultures through festivals such as Diwali, Christmas and the Chinese New Year. Activities such as storytelling and food tasting enrich the children's understanding of Eid.

Children develop a good knowledge of keeping healthy and safe. They make healthy choices at snack time and learn about the importance of taking exercise. Children explain that they keep healthy by eating fresh fruit and vegetables and drinking milk and water. They use equipment safely as they make pizzas, apple pies and fruit salads. Their physical skills are developed well as they dance, climb and balance on apparatus. Talks on road safety from the police service and fire safety from the fire service give children a good understanding of keeping safe in their environment.

Children are keen to learn and make good progress because staff support them well in their learning. Their communication, language and literacy skills are developed well through role play in their optician and vet surgery. They listen carefully to stories such as 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears' and enjoy making porridge for baby bear. Children's creative skills are developed well as they print patterns with leaves and create colourful pictures of fireworks and bonfires. Most children count up to fifteen and beyond by the time they leave pre-school and recognise two-dimensional shapes indoors and outdoors. They enjoy practising tapping rhythms on percussion instruments and take turns to strum the guitar, play the violin and keyboard, and shake the bells. Children cooperate well as they complete simple programmes on the computer and build a wall out of blocks. They sing songs such as 'Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star' tunefully and enjoy mark making in sand and shaving foam. Children gain a good understanding of food around the world as they taste couscous from Africa, noodles from Japan, kiwi fruit from New Zealand and pomegranates from India. Overall, they are prepared well for their next stage in learning.

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	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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