

# Hartley House Childcare Unit

Inspection report for early years provision

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117120

**Inspection date**

16/04/2012

**Inspector**

Ruth Thrasher

**Setting address**

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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**

Hartley House Childcare Unit opened in 1986 and is run by a voluntary committee. It operates from a purpose-built building on the site of Eggbuckland Community College in the Eggbuckland area of Plymouth, Devon. Children have access to a baby room, three play rooms and an enclosed outdoor play area. The school hall and some of the school grounds are also available for use. It is open each weekday from 8am to 6pm for 48 weeks of the year. Pre-school sessions are from 9am to 11.30am and from 12.30pm to 3pm. Children may attend for all or part of the day. After school care is provided for children from Eggbuckland Vale Primary School and children are escorted from the school to the unit. A holiday play scheme operates during some of the school holidays and is open to all children.

The unit is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. A maximum of 24 children may attend the unit at any one time. There are currently 68 children on roll during term time, of whom 48 are in the early years age group. Numbers attending the holiday play scheme vary. The unit supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and children who speak English as an additional language.

There are nine members of staff who work directly with the children, eight of whom have relevant qualifications. Two staff are undertaking degrees. A financial administrator is also employed. The unit provides funded early education for children aged two, three and four years. It operates in line with the Forest School philosophy, with outdoor learning taking place in local woods one day a week. The unit has achieved the Bristol Standard quality assurance kitemark.

## **The overall effectiveness of the early years provision**

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children are making good progress because the strong staff team provides very effective support for children's learning and development. Children enjoy a good balance of child-initiated and adult-led play and have plenty of opportunities to make choices. Overall, resources are continuously reviewed and improved. An outstanding partnership with parents and carers provides excellent support for children's individual needs. The unit uses self-evaluation very effectively to improve practice and therefore demonstrates a good capacity to continue to improve outcomes for children.

## **What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?**

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

- build on the existing range of positive images that challenge children's thinking and help them to embrace differences in society.

## **The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision**

Staff have a good understanding of how to keep children safe and safeguarding is given a high priority in the unit. Staff update their knowledge by attending training, including safer recruitment training, and through discussion and quizzes at staff meetings. There are robust systems in place to ensure that adults working with children remain suitable and Criminal Records Bureau checks are regularly updated. Risk assessments are thorough, the premises are secure and there are effective systems for the collection of children and monitoring of visitors to ensure children's safety. Children are safely escorted from the local school to the after school club.

The very experienced manager leads a strong and enthusiastic team of staff who have a good commitment to continuous professional development. They participate in a quality assurance scheme and use self-evaluation effectively to identify priorities for improvement. For example, they reviewed the resources and replaced many of the old plastic toys with quality wooden ones and natural materials, including new wooden cots. They have rearranged the layout of the rooms to improve opportunities for children to initiate their learning. The good practice within the unit is supported by comprehensive policies and procedures that are regularly reviewed and discussed at staff meetings. The unit has a positive approach to inclusion and has appointed a member of staff as the named coordinator for equalities. This helps to ensure all children are fully included. Children are learning about different cultures through activities such as tasting foreign foods. They have access to various resources that show positive images of diversity although this remains an area for further development.

The unit supports children with additional needs very well and works in partnership with a range of other services, such as speech therapists, the Portage service and the local children's centre. Children who speak English as an additional language are well supported with equipment labelled in their home language. There are good links with the neighbouring primary school to support children's transition to school. Effective systems to share information with other settings provide continuity and support for children.

Partnerships with parents and carers are outstanding. Parents and carers speak extremely highly of the commitment and support of staff. They work exceptionally well together to ensure children's individual needs are met. Parents and carers are very well informed about their children's progress. They are easily able to access and contribute to their learning journey files. The staff use a range of imaginative opportunities to involve parents and carers, such as a twilight Christmas celebration and a 'Dads and Forest School' day. Parents and carers report that staff go the extra mile to involve them and support the children, and as a result the children are very happy and make good progress.

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

Children show great confidence within the unit, relate well to staff and are actively engaged in their learning throughout the day. They enjoy the freedom to play indoors or out, select resources and choose what they want to do. They take part in a very good range of activities outdoors with equipment that they can use in many different ways to support their learning. These include crates, bamboo and tyres. They build different structures, watch how water flows down a chute, balance on boards and use the tyres as a pirate ship. They thoroughly enjoy their experiments, learn to play cooperatively and develop skills in all areas of learning.

Staff support the children well, extend their thinking and provide additional equipment to develop their games. For example, a child plays 'shops' with sunhats and an adult provides a till and shopping bags. Children learn how things grow as they plant sunflowers, count two seeds for each pot and write their names on labels. They understand that the strawberry plant needs water when it wilts. They thoroughly enjoy digging in the compost using garden forks and other small tools, carefully filling pots of different sizes. The babies also enjoy being outside and are fascinated by the activities of the older children, watching and learning. They have quiet time in their own base room, but often join in with the older children. For example, a toddler sits on the rug 'helping' an older child complete a wooden puzzle.

Children come together for circle time and group activities. They learn to listen to each other and take turns as they share their news about the holidays. They join in familiar refrains as they listen to rhymes and stories and repeat the letter sounds. They learn about shape, size and colour through stories, matching and sorting games. They learn about technology by pressing numbers on calculators and using the webcam on the laptop. Overall they are developing good skills to support them in their future learning. Mixing with the older children after school supports their transition to school and older children learn to take care of the younger ones.

Regular observations and termly assessments successfully chart children's progress and the manager completes a mapping exercise to ensure all areas of learning are fully covered. Staff obtain additional support for children if required, which ensures all children make good progress in relation to their starting points.

Children's behaviour is generally very good as they are thoroughly engaged in their play and staff give them lots of praise and encouragement. They learn about feelings and emotions as they pass round the feelings ball and talk about whether they are happy or sad. Through celebrating different festivals they learn to appreciate different lifestyles. Forest School teaches them to appreciate the natural environment and the importance of being active and having healthy lifestyles. They learn to keep themselves safe around the camp fire by only entering the safety circle when invited by a member of staff to toast their marshmallow.

## 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

<b>How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?</b>	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	2

### The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	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	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

<b>Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	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