

Hawkhurst Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector	Claire Parnell

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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

Hawkhurst Pre-school is a committee-run group that moved to the current premises in 2010 and is situated in a purpose-built building adjacent to the Primary School in Hawkhurst. It was previously known as Puddle Ducks Preschool.

Children have access to an enclosed outdoor play area. It is open each weekday from 9am until 3pm apart from Wednesday which finishes at 12 noon. On a Wednesday, a parent and toddler group is held from 1.30pm until 3pm. On Friday, the afternoon session ends at 14.15. The pre-school is open during school term time only.

The pre-school is registered on the Early Years Register. A maximum of 24 children from two and a half years may attend the setting at any one time. There are currently 48 children in the early years age range on roll, some in part-time places. The pre-school currently supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language. There are seven members of staff, five of whom are qualified to level three and above. The manager has a BA Degree in Early Years and holds Early Years Professional Status.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

The unique needs of every child are promoted well and all staff work together to succeed in meeting children's learning and welfare needs nearly all the time. Children make good progress towards the early learning goals of the Early Years Foundation Stage, due to the staff's knowledge of each child's interests and how they learn best. This is enhanced by the very effective partnerships with parents and other professionals, which positively promotes continuity and consistency for young children into their formal educational years. All staff demonstrate a clear commitment towards ongoing development and improvements through a robust self evaluation system, ongoing training and professional support.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- develop differentiated group activities further to sustain engagement for all children
- extend learning initiatives during snack time.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children are safeguarded extremely well through effective implementation of policies and procedures that help to keep them safe at all times. Staff have attended child protection and safeguarding training and are thoroughly knowledgeable about action to take when they have concerns about the welfare of a child in their care. All staff working with children have relevant checks to promote their suitability to work unsupervised with the children. Visitors are recorded and asked to wear identification as part of their safety routines. Very consistent and ongoing risk assessments are in place to provide children with a safe, stimulating, exciting and secure place to play and explore. Staff demonstrate exceptional skills at supervising children without encroaching on their life of play, particularly when children are exploring the outside area. A safe arrival and collection procedure helps to ensure children's safety. Children are greeted by all available staff, to provide a welcoming and inviting environment for both children and their families.

The manager, committee and staff are all highly committed to driving improvement within the provision. They involve other professionals, such as the local school and parents, to gain information about what is effective and what to improve on. The staff team are eager to take on advice and make changes in practices to enhance outcomes for children. A thorough evaluation is completed regularly to assess the provision's strengths and to identify areas for development. Staff are encouraged to attend regular training, which is identified through regular meetings and annual appraisals.

Children have access to an extensive range of activities, resources and equipment, both indoors and outdoors. Staff utilise the outside area extremely well to entice children to explore and use their imagination. This area is used all year round. For example, children use the slopes during snowy and muddy conditions to experiment with movement, textures and malleable materials. Children locate, identify and choose their preferred activity. For example, children engaged in role play extend their imaginations by building blocks into an obstacle course as part of the funfair game. This then leads to children challenging their physical skills of negotiating the blocks by stepping over and climbing through. Staff work flexibly, demonstrating excellent skills at using their initiative, to provide children with sensitive and suitable supervision throughout the session. Staff confidently use their new found skills gained through ongoing training, to encourage children's learning through different dimensions of play.

Equality and diversity is promoted well. Staff are fully aware of children's backgrounds and provide resources to reflect and value their backgrounds. For example, dual language books and key words are displayed, to support children with English as a second language. Staff use information carefully to consider the planning of events and themes which relate to children's understanding of diversity within their community. Children have access to a good range of resources that promote positive images of today's society, such as books, puzzles, play people and posters.

The partnership with parents and other professionals is unquestionably strong. All staff have a positive commitment to consistent and continuous care and learning opportunities for all children. Parents make very positive comments about how happy and reassured they are with the care their children receive and the rate of their development. Parents are involved in feeding back ideas for improvements via questionnaires. They are actively encouraged to participate in pre-school life, consultation events and training. The setting shows a commitment to keeping parents informed about children's progress through a contact book and, more importantly, time at the end of the session to talk. The setting shows a very high regard for other settings and professionals involved in the care of the children. Professional links are made with key people at other settings and information is shared regarding children's interests and progress. Staff use liaisons with health visitors and speech and language therapists to enhance children's communication and all round development. A very close link is made with the local primary school, where children develop close relationships with the reception teacher, building their confidence in the transition to 'big school'.

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

Children are very happy and settled due to the welcoming and happy atmosphere within the provision. Children are familiar with the routine and the availability of resources, therefore children are confident to explore and independently choose what they want to play with. Staff have a clear respect for the children and know them extremely well, therefore making learning for the individual child their main focus. Staff effectively carry out structured activities such as story times with different ability groups. However, sometimes there are some children who become disengaged and show little interest in these sessions, deciding to initiate their own entertainment. Outside play has a huge emphasis on the children's progress within the Early Years Foundation Stage. Children become engrossed in the cleverly resourced area, allowing them to get messy with mud and explore problem solving through the undulating slopes. For example, children running up and down the slopes discover that they need to run faster to get up the slope and come down slowly due to the slippery mud.

Children explore with numbers and amounts, using imaginative ways to incorporate displayed numerals and cotton reels on strings to associate with the amount. Children question why there aren't any cotton reels for 'zero'. Staff carefully explain the meaning of 'zero' to support their understanding. Children thoroughly enjoy mark making using the numerous resources available, such as wipe boards, chalk boards and the arts and crafts table. Some more able children write recognisable letters to form their name. Children are introduced to themes at the creative workshop, but are encouraged to use their own imagination to create. For example, two children decide to make trophies for their bike races outside. Staff support children well by talking them through what they need and how to make it. All these activities help to promote children's skills for the future.

Staff use very effective planning, assessment and observation systems. Information gained from the parents is used to identify children's starting points and is used to inform the planning for their ongoing development. Evaluative observations are made of their progress and are linked efficiently to areas and stages of learning. Children's next steps are decided through discussion with parents as well as by using the monitoring system of where children are within the Early Years Foundation Stage. However, some routine activities, such as snack times, are not always extended to make the most of children's learning opportunities, such as self help skills and name recognition.

Children feel safe and understand the boundaries within the provision. Staff use effective strategies to support children's negotiation and cooperation skills. For example, children are asked to fetch the sand timer when they find it hard to share resources, clearly understanding that this an acceptable way to help them share and take turns. Staff are very good role models, reminding children about good manners and helping others. Their clear explanations help children to appreciate the care from others. Children show a good understanding of hygiene practices, talking about washing their hands before eating and after toileting. They understand the importance of 'washing the germs off' by using running water and soap. Children access fresh air at every opportunity throughout the session, extending their physical skills by using the open space to explore and experiment with movement. Healthy snack and lunches are encouraged, with good discussions at meal times about eating healthily to gain energy for the afternoon session.

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	1
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	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	1
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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