

Hollyhocks Montessori Playschool

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector

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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*.

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Description of the setting

Hollyhocks Montessori Playschool opened in 1994. It operates from one room in a farmhouse in a rural area near Ringmer. The setting opens five days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 9.10am to 12.30pm. Every Tuesday there is an additional music session till 1.00pm. All children share access to an enclosed outdoor play area.

The setting is registered on the Early Years Register only. A maximum of 16 children may attend at any one time. There are currently 31 children on roll in the early years age range. The setting is in receipt of funding for the provision of free early education for children aged three and four years. Children come from a wide catchment area. The setting currently supports children who speak English as an additional language.

The setting employs four staff. Of these, three staff and the owner/manager hold appropriate early years qualifications. There are three staff with Qualified Teacher Status. The staff use the Montessori method of teaching.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is satisfactory.

Children are happy, settled and enjoy their time in the setting. Their individual welfare needs are met and they make satisfactory progress in the areas of learning. However, staff do not make full use of the environment and resources to help promote children's independence, enjoyment and awareness of healthy living. Parents receive some information about the setting and their child's progress although opportunities to actively involve them in children's learning and assessment have not been fully explored. The staff team shows some capacity to maintain continuous improvement to outcomes for children. They have limited plans to help bring about some improvement to the setting although there are no robust self-evaluation processes in place.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- improve the two-way flow of information, knowledge and expertise between parents and practitioners, to help support and extend children's learning and development
- improve the cleanliness of the premises and equipment and support children's understanding of how hygiene promotes good health
- organise space and resources for indoor and outdoor play, to allow children

- to safely select and use activities and resources independently
- implement the rigorous use of reflective practice and self-evaluation to identify strengths and priorities for development that will continuously improve the quality of the provision for all children.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Staff show a satisfactory awareness of how to safeguard children. There are appropriate procedures for them to follow if they have any child protection concerns. Appropriate recruitment procedures are implemented to help make sure that staff are suitable to work with children. Staff take adequate steps to promote children's safety and minimise hazards. This enables children to play, free from harm under adult supervision. The required documentation is in place and sufficiently well maintained. This aids staff in promoting children's safety and meeting their individual welfare needs. Overall, staff use a varied range of safe and challenging resources to support children's learning. However, the areas used by children are quite cluttered and cramped in places. Staff are not making the best use of the available space and storage of the play resources to fully enable children to play freely and help themselves to equipment. Some of the resources and visual displays show positive images of diversity. Staff make use of these to promote children's developing awareness of differences in society.

Staff form largely informal, friendly partnerships with parents. Parents are happy with the homely, family feel of the setting. They like the fact that it is a small group where staff are caring and supportive. Parents made very positive comments about the outdoor area. They receive basic written information about the setting although some of this is out of date. Systems for obtaining information from parents about a child's background are not robust to enable staff to fully meet their needs and promote equality of opportunity. Staff regularly share adequate information with parents about their child's well-being and development. However, staff do not fully exploit the ways in which parents can be involved with children's learning and the assessment process. The owner forms satisfactory links with other providers and agencies who are involved with children. This enables the setting to promote consistency in children's care and education.

Staff use some form of evaluation to help improve the quality of the provision. For example, they evaluate the daily activities to see whether the learning intention was met. The owner carries out informal appraisals with staff that help identify training needs. Staff attend some training to increase their knowledge and skills. The owner shows an adequate awareness of the strengths and weaknesses of the setting. The staff team has successfully identified the introduction of a 'forest school' as an area for future development. However, there is no rigorous ongoing system for monitoring and evaluating the overall provision in order to help continually improve outcomes for children.

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

Staff plan and provide a suitable range of activities that help children make sound progress towards the early learning goals. They have appropriate systems in place for observing children and assessing their progress. Staff identify next steps for individual children and use the information to provide relevant learning experiences for them. Adults interact satisfactorily with children to extend their learning as they play. As a result, children secure the skills they need in order to progress in their learning. Children are beginning to gain an understanding of diversity through some of the activities.

Children arrive happily and soon settle at activities. They greet each other warmly and discuss plans for games. They organise and act out different scenarios together such as fire fighting. Children enjoy cuddling up on the sofa to look at books together. Children form positive relationships with adults and friends. They generally behave appropriately and staff gently remind children of the need to share resources when disputes arise. Children are developing a sense of how to stay safe. Staff reinforce the safety rules when children are playing. Children show they feel safe and secure in the setting.

Children's developing independence is not fully promoted. There is a wide variety of toys and equipment but much of it is not stored effectively. As a result, children cannot always safely and easily access the play equipment independently. This limits their opportunities to make choices and decisions about their play. Children enjoy playing outside in the interesting garden area. They are developing their physical skills as they play on the large equipment. They also have opportunities to feed the pigs, chickens and geese. However, staff do not make full use of the outdoor area as a learning environment. For example, children do not always have sufficient resources to choose from when playing outdoors to help them explore and investigate.

Children show a developing awareness of the wider world. They confidently talk about different coloured ladybirds as they take part in the cooking activity. They readily share their experiences, showing they feel secure and confident. Children use tools with increasing skill. For example, they use the shaker to put flour on their board and then roll out the dough with a rolling pin. Children count and name colours as they take part in different activities. They have some opportunities to develop their early writing skills.

Children are beginning to show an understanding of what is good to eat. They take part in activities where they learn about good and bad foods. They enjoy healthy meals and snacks. They have easy access to their bottles of water. However, staff do not consistently reinforce hygiene practices to help children develop their understanding of the importance of good hygiene. Sometimes children do not wash their hands at appropriate times such as before a cooking activity. The use of a shared towel is not effective at minimising the spread of infection. Staff do not maintain all the equipment and all areas of the setting to a sufficiently high standard of cleanliness. This impacts on children's awareness of what constitutes a

healthy lifestyle.

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?	3
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	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	3
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding	3
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	3

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	3
The extent to which children feel safe	3
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	3
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	3

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