

Hollybush Under Fives Playgroup

c/o Hollybush Primary School, Fordwich Rise, HERTFORD, Hertfordshire, SG14 2DF

Inspection date	13/02/2014
Previous inspection date	03/03/2010

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	
	Previous inspection:	
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		2
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		2
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		2

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision is good

- Children develop strong bonds with key persons and other staff. This is because warm, ongoing support effectively helps them to maintain a feeling of safety and security.
- The manager and her staff understand how to effectively safeguard children in their care. They carefully assess the risks in the playgroup and minimise these, which ensure that children can use all accessible areas safely as they play.
- There is a good range of effective policies and procedures, which are known to staff. This effectively supports the day-to-day practice and smooth running of the playgroup.
- Staff develop very good relationships with parents. This helps them to be consistently aware of children's changing needs and provide effective care, tailored to all children's personal requirements.
- Staff take account of children's individual development needs and generally good teaching successfully supports their engagement in learning.

It is not yet outstanding because

- Occasionally staff do not help children to fully develop their self-help skills. For example, they are not consistently encouraged to independently put on their boots for outdoor play.
- There is scope to develop children's literacy skills further, for example, by encouraging them to write their name on their own creations.

Information about this inspection

Inspections of registered early years provision are:

- scheduled at least once in every inspection cycle – the current cycle ends on 31 July 2016
- scheduled more frequently where Ofsted identifies a need to do so, for example where provision was previously judged inadequate
- brought forward in the inspection cycle where Ofsted has received information that suggests the provision may not be meeting the legal requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage or where assessment of the provision identifies a need for early inspection
- prioritised where we have received information that the provision is not meeting the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and which suggests children may not be safe
- scheduled at the completion of an investigation into failure to comply with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed activities indoors and in the outside play areas.
- The inspector looked at a wide range of documentation including children's assessment records and planning documentation.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation with the manager.
- The inspector spoke with the manager, staff and parents at appropriate times throughout the inspection.
- The inspector checked evidence of suitability and qualifications of staff working with children and the manager's improvement plan.

Inspector

Ann Cozzi

Full report

Information about the setting

Hollybush Under Fives Playgroup registered in 1992 and is on the Early Years Register. It operates from a double mobile classroom in the grounds of Hollybush Primary School, Hertford, Hertfordshire, and is managed by a committee. There is an enclosed area available for outdoor play.

The playgroup employs eight members of childcare staff. Of these, the manager holds an appropriate early years qualification at level 5, four members of staff hold a qualification at level 3 and one member of staff holds a qualification at level 2. There are also three members of staff who are working towards a qualification at level 3. There are currently 46 children attending who are in the early years age group. The nursery provides funded early education for three- and four-year-old children. The playgroup holds a Hertfordshire Quality Assurance standard and is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance.

The playgroup opens Monday to Friday term time only. Sessions are from 9am to 12 noon and from 12 noon to 3pm. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The playgroup supports a small number of children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

To further improve the quality of the early years provision the provider should:

- provide further chances for children to develop independence skills, for instance, putting on their own boots before going outside

- extend opportunities for children to develop early literacy skills, such as supporting them to recognise their own name and attempting to write it on their creations.

Inspection judgements

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend

Children are provided with a good range of learning experiences which they enjoy. This is because, on the whole, planning accurately reflects their individual needs and interests. Staff show a good understanding of each child's needs and use this well, by adapting teaching methods to capture their interests and imagination. As a result, children consistently engage in active learning. The assessment of children's learning is good, which helps to ensure that each child is developing in line with expectations, based on their age, ability and starting points. Observations are undertaken regularly and are used to identify and plan children's next steps in learning. As a result, children effectively

develop the skills they need to prepare them for the next stage in their learning and their eventual move to mainstream school.

Parents are encouraged to share information about their child's achievements and interests. This is used to inform planning in order to support children's ongoing learning. For example, staff provide parents with ideas of how to support their child's learning at home. Staff have undertaken detailed progress checks for children aged two. They ensure that these are shared with parents who contribute information about their child's development. This is used to identify any areas where children's progress is less than expected along with plans, which address any concerns raised. Good relationships with other professionals ensure that staff are able to effectively meet the needs of individual children, particularly those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. As a result, all children are cared for in a fully inclusive environment and make good progress.

Staff encourage children to explore numbers in everyday activities, such as counting wooden balls as they eagerly push them down a tube. This teaching method successfully engages children's attention, helping them to develop numerical skills. The organisation of a wide range of activities at low level contributes towards teaching children how to become independent. For example, they are attracted by colourful and exciting craft materials, such as glitter and brightly coloured, shiny metallic shapes. They enjoy the feel of glitter and spend time exploring its properties. For example, they notice that they can make marks as they trail their fingers through it. However, at times staff do not consistently encourage children to fully develop self-help skills, for example, putting on their own boots before going outside. Using single-handed tools, children learn how to control glue sticks effectively. Practising their developing physical skills, they spread glue onto their piece of card and carefully choosing from a wide range of items, they show concentration as they work on their creation. Children proudly hold up their work for everyone to see, and enjoy the warm recognition they receive from staff for their achievement. Staff promote children's language skills through lively conversation and activities they enjoy. For instance, they enjoy sitting with staff on large comfortable cushions, listening to stories. Effective teaching methods, such as using a range of voices and intonation ensures that children are interested and engaged in active learning. Staff help children to become absorbed in this activity because they invite them to join in, contributing their own thoughts and opinions about each of the pictures they see on each page. Children's language and understanding of the world is extended as they are introduced to words, such as 'snail'. They practise their pronunciation of this unfamiliar word and ask staff questions about this creature, such as 'where does it live?'. However, opportunities for children to develop literacy skills are inconsistent. For example, staff do not consistently encourage children to write their own name on their work. During each session children have the option to choose if they play indoors or outside, which helps towards supporting all learning styles. Staff encourage children to 'have a go' at new activities and begin to judge risks for themselves. They are close by at all times, which ensures that they are able to monitor children's safety and offer guidance and encouragement as children use a wide range of outdoor resources. This encourages children's physical development and supports them to increase their abilities through effort and practise.

The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children

The key person system effectively supports children's emotional well-being and independence. Children form strong bonds and secure emotional attachments with a staff team who care about them. There are gradual settling-in sessions to ensure that children have the chance to get to know their key person and other staff, before they are left by their parents. Staff also employ other effective ways to help children settle quickly. For instance, staff ask parents for detailed information about children's interests and personal care needs. This is effectively used and maintained during placement to ensure that good levels of care are provided, tailored to individual needs. On arrival each day children are met by staff and they demonstrate that they feel secure as they happily run in greeting friends and staff alike.

Children behave well because staff provide them with clear and consistent guidance. Staff also act as good role models, sensitively giving reminders and age-appropriate explanations, which supports children's understanding about what acceptable behaviour is. Children show high levels of confidence and self-esteem, asking adults questions without hesitation. For example, they eagerly tell a member of staff the rules of their game and how she should play it. Children develop good levels of confidence and self-esteem because staff consistently recognise their achievements. Children display a good sense of awareness with regard to staying safe. For example, they know how to hold and use scissors safely 'sitting at the table'. On the whole, children effectively manage their own personal needs. For instance, more able children take themselves to the toilet independently and wash their own hands without prompting.

Staff provide clear messages to children in order to increase their understanding of why it is important to have a healthy diet. For example, they initiate discussions with children about which kind of foods are good for us. Free-flow play between the indoors and outdoor play area benefits children's health. This is because they have lots of chances to take part in vigorous play as they run around and use climbing apparatus and wheeled toys. Staff teach children about the effects of exercise on their bodies, using resources, such as a stethoscope to enable them to hear their increased heartbeat.

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

Arrangements for safeguarding children are robust and there is a clear policy in place which is shared with parents. All staff have received safeguarding training and regular discussions are held during staff meetings. This ensures that staff maintain their good understanding of the process to follow should they have any concerns about a child in their care. Recruitment procedures ensure that appropriate checks are carried out on all staff working with children. This provides parents with the reassurance that their children are cared for by adults who are suitable. Clear risk assessments are in place and daily safety checks carried out by staff before children arrive mean that the environment is safe and any hazards have been suitably minimised. This promotes children's enjoyment because it enables them to play in a safe and secure environment.

Most of the staff team hold an appropriate early years qualification and all staff have a wealth of experience. As a consequence, they are able to fully support children to make good progress towards the early learning goals. The managers' close and thorough monitoring of staff practice shows that their work is valued and that they are suitably supported in developing their professional practice. For example, the formal appraisal system, along with frequent supervision meetings, is used effectively to check on performance and review the individual training needs of the team. As a result, staff training has had a positive impact on children's learning. Effective monitoring of the planning and assessment of children's learning means that the manager has an accurate view with regard to the quality of teaching and how this influences children's progress. Staff are clearly able to identify where children are not making as much progress as they could be and know how to support this in children's best interest.

Good partnerships with parents are in place. Parents are provided with regular information about their children and there are information boards in the entrance lobby, which give parents a variety of information about the playgroup including forthcoming events. This contributes towards helping parents to feel valued, encouraging them to support their children's learning in the playgroup and at home. For example, parents participate in special events to help raise money to provide extra resources for children. Parents spoken to during the inspection provided positive feedback about the manager and her staff. Parents say that their children 'love the staff'. They feel that they are kept well informed about their child's progress and that their children are 'happy and having a good time'. Staff also work closely in partnership with other professionals and settings to effectively support children's continuity of care and learning.

What inspection judgements mean

Registered early years provision

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	Outstanding provision is highly effective in meeting the needs of all children exceptionally well. This ensures that children are very well prepared for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 2	Good	Good provision is effective in delivering provision that meets the needs of all children well. This ensures children are ready for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	The provision is not giving children a good standard of early years education and/or there are minor breaches of the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be monitored and inspected within twelve months of the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	Provision that is inadequate requires significant improvement and/or enforcement action. The provision is failing to give children an acceptable standard of early years education and/or is not meeting the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be monitored and inspected again within six months of the date of this inspection.
Met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider continues to meet the requirements for registration.
Not met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider does not meet the requirements for registration.

Inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of provision that is registered on the Early Years Register. The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and care, known as the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Setting details

Unique reference number	409626
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	872238
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 5
Total number of places	30
Number of children on roll	46
Name of provider	Hollybush Under Fives Playgroup Committee
Date of previous inspection	03/03/2010
Telephone number	01992 509906

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Type of provision

For the purposes of this inspection the following definitions apply:

Full-time provision is that which operates for more than three hours. These are usually known as nurseries, nursery schools and pre-schools and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the higher fee for registration.

Sessional provision operates for more than two hours but does not exceed three hours in any one day. These are usually known as pre-schools, kindergartens or nursery schools

and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the lower fee for registration.

Childminders care for one or more children where individual children attend for a period of more than two hours in any one day. They operate from domestic premises, which are usually the childminder's own home. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Out of school provision may be sessional or full-time provision and is delivered before or after school and/or in the summer holidays. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. Where children receive their Early Years Foundation Stage in school these providers do not have to deliver the learning and development requirements in full but should complement the experiences children receive in school.

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