

Hollyhocks Montessori Playschool

Upper Wellingham Farmhouse, Wellingham Lane, Ringmer, Nr Lewes, East Sussex, BN8 5SW

Inspection date

19/06/2014

Previous inspection date

20/06/2012

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This inspection:

1

Previous inspection:

3

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend 1

The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children 1

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision 1

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision is outstanding

- Staff provide exemplary support for every child and celebrate the uniqueness of individuals which enables all children to grow in confidence make excellent progress.
- Staff are extremely experienced and very knowledgeable about the children in their care which means that they are able to nurture children to enable them to achieve their potential.
- Staff support children with speech and language difficulties particularly well and these children make progress above expectations.
- Staff work very closely with parents and carers and take time to ensure that everyone is involved in planning what children should do next. This close partnership working benefits children as there are shared aims and priorities between home and playschool.
- The impressive outside areas provide spaces where children can be adventurous, can explore and can learn about the natural world about them. Such opportunities prepare children well for their future lives.
- Staff challenge children to use what they already know to inform their ideas. This helps children to think about what they are doing and helps them to learn to make appropriate choices and decisions.

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 in the indoor play area, the garden and also accompanied staff and children on a walk.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation of an activity in the garden with the manager.
- The inspector spoke to parents and children and took their views into account.
- The inspector sampled a range of documents, including staff recruitment and suitability records, safeguarding documents, and children's development files.
- The inspector spoke to the manager and the staff about their safeguarding roles and responsibilities.

Inspector

Rebecca Swindells

Full report

Information about the setting

Hollyhocks Montessori Playschool opened in 1994. It operates from one very large room, which is sub-divided, in a farmhouse in a rural area near Ringmer, East Sussex. The children have access to a large enclosed garden. The playschool receives funding for the provision of free early education for children aged three and four. The staff use the Montessori approach in their teaching. The setting is registered on the Early Years Register only. 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. There are currently 30 children on roll in the early years age range. The setting employs six staff. Of these, four staff and the owner/manager hold appropriate early years qualifications. There are four staff with Qualified Teacher Status. The playschool receives support from the local authority advisory service.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- further promote children's independence by improving the storage arrangements for resources so that children can see more easily where they should put their toys when they have finished playing with them.

Inspection judgements

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

Staff meet the needs of all children exceptionally well and offer a wealth of opportunities to enable children to make progress. Staff prepare all children extremely well for the next stage of their learning because they take time to teach them the skills they need to succeed. Children play extremely well in the calm and gentle environment. Staff remind children of their expectations in a sensitive way and so children cooperate exceptionally well with each other as they share and use resources. Staff understand how to support children as they play together and show an outstanding awareness of when to intervene and when to enable children to learn to resolve their own disagreements. Such skills prepare children very well for the future. Staff use a broadly Montessori approach to their teaching, enabling children to explore and discover at their own pace. Staff concentrate their efforts on ensuring that all children are confident, develop well physically and can communicate clearly with others around them. Staff introduce other aspects of learning such as finding out about the world and creative play through these three key areas and children in their care make extremely good progress. All areas of learning are available both indoors and outside which means that those children who learn better in an outdoor environment are easily able to do so. Staff encourage all children to communicate with confidence. Staff nurture children who have speech and language difficulties particularly

well. They give them time to find the words they want to use. This has significant impact on these children as they grow in confidence and become more able to communicate freely with those around them. All children learn to listen carefully to ideas from other children as they share group times together. Staff use their expertise to support children to ask questions and consider the answers that others give. Such excellent support means that all children leave for school ready to listen, able to understand what others say to them and knowing that what they have to say is important. Staff plan exciting activities which motivate children to develop their physical skills. The enormous garden offers a wealth of opportunities for children to move in different ways. Children clamber over fallen branches and run in and out of bushes and staff teach them how to challenge themselves whilst keeping themselves safe. Staff fully utilise the gardens around the playschool to capture and enhance the children's curiosity in the natural world. Children delight in finding out about insects and small creatures that they see in the garden and the skilful staff use this interest to teach them how to use resources such as magnifying boxes. Such strong teaching means that children increase their knowledge of the natural world and learn to respect their environment. Staff challenge children to think about what they already know, such as which animals eat hay and where petals might have come from, when they notice things in the garden. Staff take time to give full explanations to children to develop their thinking skills. For example, when a child picked up an empty snail shell and described it as "snail skin" staff were careful to describe the differences between shells and skin and extend children's vocabulary using the words 'hard' and 'soft'. Staff understand the importance of imaginative play for children and consequently provide creative opportunities for children to role-play and make-believe. For example, staff helped children as they made grass porridge on a campfire for characters from a fairy story. Staff use what they know about the children's interests to plan activities that will excite and motivate them. Regular observations of children playing and conversations with families help to ensure that the themes are interesting and relevant for the children. Consequently, all children are eager to involve themselves in activities and take full advantage of the activities on offer. This helps all children to make excellent progress. Staff have a wealth of experience working with children and so are able to accurately assess where children need to make further progress and they plan activities to help them achieve this. There is a high adult-to-child ratio which means children who need particular support are able to get it easily. Staff discuss together the progress that children are making and adapt their plans on a daily basis which means that all children receive the support and attention that they need to do well. Parents involve themselves fully in the playschool and staff welcome their ideas and thoughts about their children. Daily conversations about progress and half-termly reports means that parents can share their opinions about their child's interests and developmental needs confidently. This partnership means that everyone works together for the benefit of the children which helps all children to achieve their potential.

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

Staff nurture every child and celebrate every individual achievement, which means that all children develop high levels of self-esteem and happiness as they play. Staff have very high expectations of children's behaviour and are consistent in their approach which helps children to feel secure and comfortable. Children respect the staff and confidently involve

them in their games knowing that they will join in and have fun with them. Staff are excellent role models and lead by example as they play games and share ideas with the children. Staff speak politely and calmly to the children and expect them to do the same. Staff expect children to be independent and provide support to help them achieve this.. Children help themselves to the equipment they need and try hard to put things back when they finish playing. Sometimes however, the organisation of resources and the organisation of 'tidy up time' does not allow children to be as independent as they want to be. Staff teach children about safety and expect them to be sensible as they play. Staff carry out thorough risk assessments and health and safety checks of all playschool areas on a regular basis. Staff expect children to have some awareness themselves of the risks they might encounter in the garden, such as nettles or splinters. Staff speak clearly to children and explain which areas of the garden are best to play in and children respect these suggestions because they understand why they have been made.. Staff prepare children very well for the future by helping them learn to make sensible and well-considered decisions about what they are going to do. Staff prepare children extremely well for school and work hard to ensure that they have all the skills they will need to help them do well. Staff attend network meetings with local schools and have strong links with reception class teachers who will have their children next. Staff share and discuss information with new class teachers and use what they know about the children to help build a good starting point for them when they go to school. This consistency of care and attention supports children exceptionally well for the next stage of their learning.

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

The provider has an excellent understanding of all the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. She ensures that all required documents are up to date and she reviews them regularly. There are policies and procedures in place which staff work to which means that the experience for children is consistent and predictable which helps them settle quickly and grow in confidence. Staff have an excellent understanding of safeguarding and are clear about their responsibilities in keeping children safe. The staff team have worked together for many years and there are few changes. However, the manager has effective systems in place to ensure that any future staff member recruited is appropriately checked and is suitable and appropriately qualified to work with children. The well-qualified staff team are highly reflective and confidently review what they do. They talk to each other on a daily basis about the children and they share advice and ideas together. Staff are ambitious and are not afraid to try new ideas and innovations if they believe they will benefit the children. Staff attend training from the local authority and use their experience to share what they have learnt with their colleagues. Children benefit from the knowledge and experience of the staff and also from the staff's willingness to improve what they do. The manager has an extremely clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of her staff team. Consequently she is able to support them very well. The manager works alongside her team with the children and so most support is informal as she leads by example demonstrating best practice. The manager also uses the strengths in her staff team to support others who are less confident in particular areas which means that the provision for children is balanced and extremely well

thought out. The manager recognises that different children need different kinds of staff and so she considers this when planning activities with her team. This sensitive approach not only allows staff to show their strengths but also provides exemplary support for the children who attend. The small staff team are exceptionally knowledgeable about the children in their care. Staff encourage children to develop at their own pace. This nurturing attitude supports children extremely well and encourages all children to fulfil their potential. Staff encourage parents to share their opinions and willingly listen to their thoughts and ideas. Children contribute their ideas eagerly because they feel confident and know that staff will listen to them. Staff have addressed recommendations raised at previous inspections thoroughly and work willingly with local authority advisors to further improve their practice. Staff work well with other professionals involved with the children and families in their care. Staff attend update meetings and implement strategies that other professionals suggest to them. Staff involve families fully in all discussions about children and consequently parents feel that everything the staff do is for the benefit of their children. Parents describe the playschool as a "magical place" and say that "they can't even believe that such a place exists". Parents are equally warm in their praise for the staff saying that they are "caring" and "nurturing" and say that their children are "so happy". This means that children have every opportunity to do well because everyone around them works together as a team.

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	109440
Local authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	816956
Type of provision	Sessional provision
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	2 - 5
Total number of places	16
Number of children on roll	30
Name of provider	Sally Trotman
Date of previous inspection	20/06/2012
Telephone number	01273 813246

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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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