

# Wheathampstead Playgroup

Nurseries Road, Wheathampstead, ST. ALBANS, Hertfordshire, AL4 8TP

<b>Inspection date</b>	14/07/2014
Previous inspection date	14/11/2011

<b>The quality and standards of the early years provision</b>	<b>This inspection:</b>	2
	Previous inspection:	2
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

- Staff interact with children very well by modelling clear language and using effective questioning. This develops children's listening, attention, thinking, understanding and speaking skills.
- Staff are kind, caring and welcoming, which helps children make positive relationships and feel safe and secure.
- Children are well-prepared emotionally for the move to nursery. The playgroup is located adjacent to the school nursery class and children quickly become familiar with the environment and staff.
- Staff have very well-established partnerships with parents, the local community and other agencies. This means that all children, including those with specific needs, receive the precise support they need to make good progress.
- Staff make safety a high priority. They keep children safe within the premises and fully understand their responsibilities in responding to and reporting any safeguarding concerns.

### It is not yet outstanding because

- Some of the routines are not always matched precisely to the learning needs of children of different ages. As a result, a few of the younger two-year-old children are not so well engaged during whole group activities.

## 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 all rooms and the garden.
- The inspector looked at a selection of policies, procedures and records, including evidence of staff suitability and qualifications.
- The inspector examined planning systems, children's learning records and photographs of children joining in with different activities.
- The inspector spoke with a trustee, the manager, staff, children and parents at appropriate times throughout the inspection.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation with the manager of a small group activity.

## Inspector

Hilary Preece

## Full report

### Information about the setting

Wheathampstead Playgroup was opened in 2010 in its current premises and is on the Early Years Register. It is managed by a committee of trustees and operates from purpose-built premises in the grounds of Beech Hyde School in Wheathampstead, Hertfordshire. The playgroup serves the local area and is accessible to all children. There is a fully enclosed area available for outdoor play. The playgroup opens Monday to Friday during school term time. Sessions are from 8.40am until 11.40am and 12.10pm until 3.10pm. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 81 children attending who are in the early years age group. The playgroup receives funding for the provision of free early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. The playgroup supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language and children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The playgroup employs 18 members of childcare staff, including regular bank staff. Ten of the staff have appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 or above. The manager holds Early Years Professional status. The playgroup completed the Hertfordshire Quality Standards quality assurance scheme in 2013.

### What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- focus more precisely on the varying needs of children of different ages and abilities when planning the daily routine and group activities in order to maximise children's learning potential at all times.

### Inspection judgements

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

The quality of teaching is good because staff have a secure knowledge of how to promote children's learning and development. They recognise children's interests and preferences, taking these into account when they plan the educational programme. Plans include a broad range of activities based on topics chosen by the children and those that reflect the local community in which the playgroup is based. It is evident that children develop the skills and positive attitudes to equip them well for their future learning. For example, they are eager to play and explore all areas of the well-equipped environments. The garden is particularly enticing and popular. This enables children who prefer to be physically active to explore different ways of learning. They are keen to make marks and practise early writing because resources, such as mini clipboards and large chalkboards, are appealing and fun to use. They enthusiastically steer pedal cars and scooters around the playground and use apparatus confidently. Staff are effectively deployed and interact well with children in order to keep them engaged and motivated in free play. They follow children's interests by encouraging them to blow bubbles in the wind and filling watering cans to

water the lavender.

Equally, most adult-led activities are delivered well to support children's capacity to learn. For example, staff capture children's attention when reading stories by varying their tone of voice. They pause to allow children time to respond to questions and express their thoughts. Other staff members sit at children's level on the carpet to help them listen and participate. As a result, children are keen to talk about the story, to predict what might happen and to recite some repeated phrases. Staff make good use of separate rooms to work quietly with small groups of children. For example, they play games to help children reinforce their knowledge of shape and colour. These occasions are valuable in helping less confident children to speak in a smaller group and encourage cooperation with others. However, when the whole group of children are together on the carpet to discuss the weather or to sing, the sessions are not always as effective in meeting children's varying needs. Some of the youngest two-year-old children cannot participate so easily in such a large group. Likewise, some of the older and more able children are not always effectively challenged because of the wide range of developmental needs. Staff recognise the need for review but as yet have not changed this daily routine.

Staff actively encourage parents to share what they know about their children. They communicate frequently with parents to inform them about children's achievements and offer advice on aspects of development that parents can support at home. They invite parents to view children's learning records and to contribute to summative assessment reports, such as the progress check made for children between two and three years. Staff provide open evenings where parents glean useful information about the Early Years Foundation Stage. This includes watching videos of their children and viewing helpful displays that link children's play to aspects of learning. Staff are experienced and knowledgeable about supporting children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Children's special educational needs and/or disabilities needs are quickly identified and individual health, care and educational plans introduced to target specific support. Staff use visual aids and a recognised signing scheme to aid children's communication, language and understanding. This approach is also used effectively with children who speak English as an additional language. Consequently, all children are supported to make good progress based on their starting points.

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

Parents comment on the particularly warm welcome they receive and the kind and caring attitude shown to their children. Key persons gather comprehensive information from parents to help them get to know the family and understand children's personal care needs. As a result, children settle in well, build positive and trusting relationships, and develop confidence. Likewise when children make the transition to nursery or school, the staff give particular attention to preparing them emotionally. Staff make regular visits with the children to the neighbouring nursery class to help children get to know the new environment and meet new adults. Staff make photographic books to share with the children to help them develop a positive attitude to moving on and reduce any anxiety.

Staff set clear boundaries for children's behaviour. They consistently explain to children

the consequences of their actions so that they learn to make informed choices and take sensible risks. For example, staff point out how to use the slide and other apparatus safely. Overall, children demonstrate their understanding for expectations, such as willingly helping to tidy away the toys. When necessary, staff help children to recognise the impact of any unwanted behaviour on others by getting down to their level and using language that children understand. They discuss any individual behavioural or developmental issues with parents and set consistent strategies to overcome difficulties. As a result, children are beginning to modify their behaviour and get along with their peers.

Staff plan daily routines that help children develop healthy habits, self-confidence and the ability to cooperate with others. Children show developing independence when managing their personal care. The snack routine is effective because staff are deployed well to demonstrate precisely how and why children should wash their hands before eating. During snack time children select what they want from a range of healthy options, and some manage to pour their own drinks. They benefit from the social experience of sitting around the table to eat and helping to lay the table. In addition, children thrive on plenty of fresh air and exercise each day. They very much enjoy using the garden and a canopy over part of the area means that they can be outside in all weathers.

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

The management team and trustees of the playgroup fully understand their responsibilities in meeting legal requirements. They follow clearly defined processes for the recruitment and management of staff, which include checking the suitability of all adults connected with the playgroup. The manager provides appropriate induction training for staff and volunteers. This equips them with the essential skills and knowledge to do their jobs. In addition, she encourages them to undertake or improve their qualifications over time. Staff are encouraged to reflect on training they attend and share what they have learned with others. This practice helps to broaden the knowledge of the whole team. The manager offers supervision through regular discussions and meetings so that staff feel confident to share any concerns as they arise. The playgroup has a relevant safeguarding children policy that is understood by all staff. They demonstrate a secure knowledge of their individual roles in protecting children and in keeping them safe and secure within the premises. This includes checking the premises as part of the daily risk assessment and closely supervising the entrance hall to ensure children's safe arrival and departure.

The playgroup successfully makes improvements based on the views of parents, children and staff. It took appropriate action to improve some documentation following the last inspection and has since completed a quality assurance scheme. Last year the manager introduced a system to track children's progress in learning over time. This helps identify any gaps in the curriculum and the need for intervention. As a result, she now has a more precise overview of the quality of the teaching and learning. The manager is supportive of her team. She knows their particular strengths and areas for development because she regularly monitors their practice. This enables her to tackle any underperformance by

providing relevant support and training. Future plans for improvement include making the recruitment process even more robust by setting probationary periods for new staff.

The playgroup keeps parents very well informed about every aspect of the provision via a range of media. This includes a detailed prospectus, regular newsletters, noticeboards, website and parent blog. In addition, staff are readily available to talk to parents at any time. The manager and playgroup trustees respond swiftly to any complaints or concerns. These are investigated fully and practice is reviewed accordingly. Partnership working with other settings and agencies is a particular strength. The playgroup has well-established links with support agencies, the children's centre and local schools. This means that interventions to support children with specific needs, and their families, are helpful and made in a timely fashion.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	EY418285
<b>Local authority</b>	Hertfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	874372
<b>Type of provision</b>	
<b>Registration category</b>	Childcare - Non-Domestic
<b>Age range of children</b>	0 - 5
<b>Total number of places</b>	36
<b>Number of children on roll</b>	81
<b>Name of provider</b>	Wheathamstead Playgroup Limited
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	14/11/2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	01582 833126

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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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