

Homestead's Pre-School

Abbotts Hall Infant School, Abbotts Drive, STANFORD-LE-HOPE, Essex, SS17 7BW

Inspection date	24/11/2014
Previous inspection date	13/01/2009

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

- Staff are very skilled at communicating with children. They consistently support them to extend their communication and language, and as a result, children develop the necessary skills that they need to become effective communicators in the future.
- Staff consistently praise children for their achievements. Children's self-esteem is high, and they are very confident and are motivated to learn.
- Staff have in-depth knowledge of current child protection issues. Their safeguarding procedures are robust, which ensures that children's safety and welfare is consistently well protected.
- Partnerships with parents are excellent. Staff work closely with them to ensure that all children's individual needs are consistently met.
- Staff have strong knowledge of how children learn and they plan interesting activities that ignite children's interests. Therefore, children make very good progress towards the early learning goals.

It is not yet outstanding because

- Staff do not always maximise opportunities to extend children's mathematical knowledge, such as, by counting objects with them during group games.
- On occasions, staff provide the younger children with the answer instead of offering alternative strategies for them think for themselves and to solve problems independently.

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.

The provision is also registered on the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. This report includes a judgment about compliance with the requirements of that register.

Inspection activities

- The inspector had a tour of the pre-school.
- The inspector observed children taking part in a range of activities and spoke with the staff and children at appropriate times throughout the inspection.
- The inspector conducted a joint observation with the pre-school manager.
- The inspector checked the qualifications and evidence of suitability of staff.
- The inspector looked at children's assessments, planning documents, policies and procedures.
- The inspector spoke to parents and has taken account of their views.

Inspector

Katherine Hurst

Full report

Information about the setting

Homestead's Pre-School was registered in 2008 and is on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. It is situated within Abbott Hall Infant School in Stanford-le-Hope and is privately owned. The pre-school serves the local area and is accessible to all children. It operates from three rooms and there is an enclosed area available for outdoor play. The pre-school employs 10 members of childcare staff. Of these, six hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 and three members of the team hold qualifications at level 4. The pre-school opens Monday to Friday during term time. Sessions are from 9am to 3pm. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 63 children attending who are in the early years age group. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. It supports a number of children with 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:

- enhance children's mathematical knowledge by maximising opportunities to teach them about numbers and quantity, such as by counting objects during play
- extend younger children's critical thinking further by offering alternative strategies to help them to solve problems independently.

Inspection judgements

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

Children are very happy at the pre-school. Staff provide a beautifully-resourced learning environment and the seven areas of learning are well promoted. They have strong, in-depth knowledge of how children learn, and as a result, the standard of teaching is very good. Staff deploy themselves effectively and this ensures that children can follow their interests and move freely between the indoor and outdoor learning environments. They plan imaginative and challenging experiences that excite the children and ignite their interests. This ensures that children engage in the activities for extended periods of time. For example, staff teach older children about quantity during a play dough activity. They provide them with flour and there is a nearby sink to get water from. Staff extend older children's critical thinking by encouraging them to measure out the ingredients by themselves and solve problems, such as, what to do when the consistency of the mixture is too runny. This also helps to promote the children's mathematical knowledge. However, on occasions, staff provide the younger children with the answer instead of giving more time or offering alternative strategies for them to solve the problem. Therefore, children are not always encouraged to think for themselves from a young age.

Staff use a range of resources, including those from the natural environment, to teach children. For example, younger children enjoy a mark making activity in shaving foam with large stones, sponges and chopsticks. Staff talk to them about the different marks they can make, using the tools and their fingers. Some children show an interest in the leaves on a nearby table and staff extend their learning by asking them what patterns they think the leaves might make in the shaving foam. Consequently, staff support children to learn about prints and patterns and promote their writing skills from an early age. Staff are excellent communicators and understand the importance of supporting all children to develop their communication skills. They promote children's learning through conversations, making comments and asking appropriate open questions. For example, staff ask children what and how questions that help to extend their critical thinking. They enhance children's vocabulary by introducing new words on a regular basis and teaching them what the word means. Staff play games with small groups of the older children to support them to develop their listening and attention skills. For example, they play a sounds bingo game that requires them to listen to sounds played on a compact disc and match it to a picture on their board. Consequently, staff ensure that children develop the necessary skills to become effective communicators in the future. However, staff do not always maximise opportunities to extend children's mathematical knowledge, such as by counting their bingo counters at the end of the game, or develop their understanding of number and quantity. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported by staff, who skilfully use their knowledge to ensure that their individual needs are consistently met. Therefore, all children are well prepared for future learning at school.

Staff work very closely with parents to ensure that children's individual needs are consistently met. They utilise the parents' knowledge of their children's abilities to identify their starting points and when completing the progress check for children between the ages of two and three years. Staff regularly share the next steps in learning so that parents are fully informed of their children's progress. Relationships with parents are enhanced as staff work in partnership with them and provide ideas and activities to promote learning at home. Staff make clear and accurate assessments of children's learning and development. This ensures that they can quickly identify any concerns that they may have and seek the appropriate support or intervention, if required. Adult-led activities are planned by staff, based on their comprehensive knowledge of children's individual needs. As a result, they make very good progress towards the early learning goals.

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

Staff are very warm and loving towards the children. Therefore, children have strong attachments with the staff and are content in their care. Staff are extremely friendly and this makes parents, carers and visitors feel very welcome. As a result, they ensure that children are developing in a happy environment. During the settling-in period, staff gain lots of valuable information from parents about their children and their care needs. They encourage parents to allow children to have their comfort toys when they attend pre-school and this helps to make children feel more comfortable. The staff's caring nature ensures that children settle in to the pre-school quickly and their emotional well-being is

well promoted. Staff support children very well during their transitions to school. They have close links with several local schools and regularly communicate with the reception class teachers. Staff use booklets and uniforms, provided to them by the schools, to familiarise the children with the new environment. They take children to visit their new classrooms and work with the teachers to settle the children in smoothly. As a result, staff support children to understand important changes in their lives and to make these easier for them. Staff consistently praise children for their achievements, which raises their self-esteem. They encourage all children to be independent and try things for themselves. For example, some younger children try to put on and take off their own coats. Staff understand the importance of giving children plenty of time to develop new skills, and they stand back, preparing to give them lots of recognition for their efforts and success. Consequently, children are very confident and are motivated to learn. Staff ensure that children are emotionally well prepared for future learning in school.

Staff consistently reinforce good behaviour with children. They clearly explain the rules of the pre-school, such as, they must not run inside, and gently remind children if they forget. As a result, their behaviour is very good. Staff are positive role models as they speak to children respectfully, which demonstrates to children how they should speak to others. Children learn to have polite manners as staff ensure that they say please and thank you. Therefore, staff teach children what is expected of them. They give children explanations why they must not do something. For example, during the shaving foam activity, staff teach children that they must not throw the large stones as they might fall on someone's foot and hurt them. As a result, children develop an awareness of how to play safely. Staff also support children to use tools safely, such as, by giving them knives to cut their fruit up at snack time. This helps children to develop their understanding of risks and practice some safety measures for themselves.

Staff encourage children to spend much time playing outside in the fresh air and ensure that they are appropriately dressed for the varying weather conditions. There are many pieces of equipment available for children to develop their larger muscles, and they have space to move around in a variety of ways. Staff teach children about the effects that physical exercise has on their bodies. For example, after jumping up and down during a parachute game, staff talk to the children about their hearts and ask them if they are beating slowly or quickly. Staff offer healthy foods for snack time and ask parents to provide a nutritious packed lunch. They monitor what each child has for their lunch and communicate with the parents about what a healthy packed lunch consists of. Staff teach children the importance of good personal hygiene. For example, staff ask children to re-wash their hands after wiping their noses, because there will be germs on their hands. Consequently, staff actively contribute to children's healthy lifestyles.

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

Staff have a thorough understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage, and as a result, they ensure that the legal requirements are consistently met. Their knowledge of safeguarding is excellent and children's safety is always paramount. Staff know the signs and symptoms that would cause them to be concerned with regard to child protection,

and who they must report their concerns to. They ensure that children are kept safe from the inappropriate use of technology at all times. For example, staff delete photographs from cameras after use, monitor children's use of the internet and do not allow anyone, including parents or visitors, to use their mobile phones in the pre-school. They provide safeguarding information for parents in the children's starter packs about taking photographs, using social media and the rules of the pre-school. Therefore, staff's safeguarding procedures are robust and children's safety and welfare is consistently well protected. Almost two thirds of the staff team hold a current first-aid qualification and management ensure that they are effectively deployed throughout the pre-school. This ensures that staff can respond to accidents quickly and children are treated by someone with up-to-date knowledge.

The management team ensure that all staff are suitable to work with children. They gain appropriate references from previous employers and monitor new starters' performance closely. All staff are regularly observed by the management team and are offered support during supervisions, if required. The staff are well qualified and they are encouraged to complete qualifications and training to extend their knowledge further. Staff are enthusiastic to develop their skills and have high expectations of themselves. They are keen to learn and then implement their new knowledge into the pre-school practice. For example, one member of staff recently attended a training course called Human toolbox. She shared with her colleagues the importance of providing children with love and nurturing care before trying to teach them anything else. Consequently, training has a positive impact as it provides staff with well-informed knowledge of how to teach and care for children to a high standard. The management team closely monitor the planning, children's assessments and the progress that they are making. This ensures that children's individual needs are consistently met.

Since the last inspection, the management team have improved the quality of their documentation in line with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. The whole staff team regularly evaluate their practice and discuss ideas of how they can improve. They seek the views of parents through questionnaires and there is a comment book for them to provide regular feedback. This demonstrates their dedication to providing children with teaching and care that is consistently of a very good quality. Partnerships with parents are excellent. Staff have strong, supportive relationships with them and are flexible to the families' needs. Parents typically describe the pre-school staff as amazing and brilliant. They are keen to recommend the pre-school to their friends and family. Staff work in partnership with other providers and professionals, such as, other nurseries that children attend and speech and language therapists. They share next steps that they identify through their observations and support children to achieve the learning objectives that the other professionals set. As a result, staff consistently support children's learning and development, and they are provided with a great start to their education.

The Childcare Register

The requirements for the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are **Met**

The requirements for the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are **Met**

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. We re-inspect nurseries and pre-schools judged as requires improvement within 12 months of the date of 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		There were no children present at the time of the inspection. The inspection judgement is that the provider continues to meet the requirements for registration.
Not met		There were no children present at the time of the inspection. 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	EY365252
Local authority	Thurrock
Inspection number	873662
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 8
Total number of places	44
Number of children on roll	63
Name of provider	Homesteads Playgroup Partnership
Date of previous inspection	13/01/2009
Telephone number	07754 589389

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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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