

Playplus Kindergarten

Kingsway, London Road, Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire, HP1 2RQ



Inspection date

2 June 2015

Previous inspection date

3 February 2011

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

Summary of key findings for parents

This provision is good

- Staff promote children's mathematical development very well. Older children demonstrate their knowledge and count up to 20 objects. In addition, they are able to recognise written numbers beyond 10. During play, staff talk about shapes with children and they introduce vocabulary, such as cube, cylinder and trapezium. This helps to prepare children in readiness for future learning at school.
- Staff support children during changes in their lives effectively, such as with the transition from the kindergarten to school. They talk about the similarities and differences between the two settings, and invite the reception teachers to visit the children. This enables children to make the move to school with confidence.
- Staff have a strong knowledge about their safeguarding responsibilities, including what to do if they were to have concerns about one of their colleagues. They fully understand the whistle-blowing procedures and, therefore, children's welfare is fully protected.
- Partnerships with parents are very good. Staff give parents specific information about children's next steps in learning and offer advice about how they can support learning at home. This promotes good continuity of learning. Parents are very keen to praise the staff and the care they provide for the children.
- All staff hold a current first-aid certificate. This means that they are able to swiftly respond to children's accidents and injuries with up-to-date knowledge. As a result, children's safety is very well protected.

It is not yet outstanding because:

- The organisation of some group circle times does not always take account of individual children's levels of ability and concentration.
- On occasions, staff do not consistently promote mealtimes as an important learning experience for children.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- review the organisation of circle time to enhance children's purposeful learning, for example, by reducing both the group size and the length of time the activity lasts
- make better use of the learning opportunities during mealtimes, in order for children to develop successful social and conversational skills.

Inspection activities

- 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 provider and held a meeting with her.
- The inspector checked evidence of Disclosure and Barring Service checks and the suitability, qualifications and training of staff.
- The inspector looked at a range of policies, procedures, children's assessments and the kindergarten's self-evaluation form.
- The inspector spoke to some parents at the inspection and took account of their views.

Inspector

Katherine Hurst

Inspection findings

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend. This is good

The well-qualified staff plan a wide range of interesting activities that engage children and promote their learning. As a result, children are making good progress. For example, a large group of older children delight as they explore the garden with a member of staff and hunt for worms. They use real tools, such as trowels and forks, to dig in the mud. Children become excited when they find woodlice and staff talk to them about why the rain might make the worms to come to the surface. This helps to extend children's understanding of the world around them. At present, staff arrange circle times depending on the ages and abilities of the children and plan a wide range of activities to extend their learning. However, there are occasions when the group sizes are too large, which results in some children being bored while they wait for their turn. In addition, children's free play is interrupted in order to take part in this activity, which is sometimes too long. Consequently, children's learning during this time is not consistently purposeful.

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

Staff promote outdoor play well. Children spend a large proportion of their day playing and learning outside in the fresh air, which promotes their good health. There are extensive pieces of large equipment, such as a climbing wall, climbing frames and swings, which allows children to develop their physical skills. Staff remind children how to keep themselves safe. For instance, they encourage young children not to put small toys in their mouth as they might choke. Children have the opportunity to practise some independence skills, such as putting on their own aprons at mealtimes. However, staff do not use mealtimes as an opportunity to maximise children's social or conversational skills. Instead, it is sometimes treated as part of the routine of the day, rather than seen as an important learning experience. For example, staff do not consistently sit down at children's eye level or engage them in discussions, such as talking about healthy eating.

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

The provider holds Qualified Teacher Status and has a good understanding of the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and implements it well. She evaluates the quality of the kindergarten effectively and, with support from the staff, identifies the improvements that could be made. For example, they are keen to encourage parents to be involved in the planning of activities. This demonstrates their commitment to continuously improve. In addition, the provider regularly observes staff practice and holds half-termly supervision meetings with them to discuss any areas for improvement. Staff have the opportunity to attend training sessions to enhance their already good knowledge. They implement any new ideas, in order to enhance the standard of their teaching. This has a positive impact on children's learning. The Early Years Foundation Stage coordinator regularly checks the quality of the activities provided. She examines the termly progress summaries of children's learning that staff complete. This ensures that each child is making good progress towards the early learning goals.

Setting details

Unique reference number	129383
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	863949
Type of provision	Full-time provision
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 6
Total number of places	48
Number of children on roll	67
Name of provider	Playplus Kindergarten
Date of previous inspection	3 February 2011
Telephone number	01442 879762

Playplus Kindergarten was registered in 1989 and moved to the current premises in 1999. The kindergarten employs 19 members of childcare staff. Of these, 15 hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3, including one with Qualified Teacher Status. The kindergarten opens Monday to Friday for 50 weeks of the year. Sessions are from 7.30am until 6pm. The kindergarten provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

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