

Wheathampstead Playgroup Ltd

Nurseries Road, Wheathampstead, St. Albans, Hertfordshire, AL4 8TP



Inspection date

28 November 2017

Previous inspection date

14 July 2014

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
	Previous inspection:	Good	2
Effectiveness of the leadership and management		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Outstanding	1
Personal development, behaviour and welfare		Outstanding	1
Outcomes for children		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents

This provision is outstanding

- The manager and staff very efficiently monitor the progress that every child makes. This helps them to swiftly identify, and fully address, any gaps in children's learning. They precisely analyse information about the progress that different groups of children make, to help ensure the outstanding success of all children.
- Children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, or who are at risk of falling behind, are supported exceptionally well. Staff use their highly effective skills to help children rapidly develop their speech, language and physical skills.
- The key-person system is exceedingly strong and settling-in processes are highly effective in helping children to quickly feel secure. Staff are exceptionally patient and caring. Children form very close attachments to their key persons, who understand their emotional needs very well.
- Staff plan a highly stimulating range of activities that encourage children of all abilities to develop their creativity and thirst for learning. They expertly tailor learning to children's individual needs. This contributes to the excellent progress children make.
- Staff work exceptionally well with parents and are very successful in engaging them in children's learning. Parents are highly complimentary about the care and education their children receive. They also value the excellent advice, feedback and support they receive. Parents comment how much their children enjoy coming to the playgroup.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- extend children's already excellent thinking skills, giving them even more opportunities to work out how to solve problems they may encounter.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed the interactions between staff and children, indoors and outdoors, and discussed children's learning with them.
- The inspector observed an adult-led activity with the manager and discussed children's engagement and learning.
- The inspector spoke to the staff and children at appropriate times and held a meeting with the manager.
- The inspector looked at a sample of documentation, including staff qualifications, suitability checks of staff and safeguarding policies and procedures.
- The inspector spoke to a number of parents and took account of their views.

Inspector

Jill Hardaker

Inspection findings

Effectiveness of the leadership and management is outstanding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Staff are extremely alert to any safeguarding and welfare concerns. They work very effectively with partner agencies, such as children's centres, to address any concerns. Staff turnover is extremely low. However, the provider still has rigorous recruitment procedures in place to help ensure they employ the best possible staff when they are needed. Robust appraisals and one-to-one supervisory meetings are very sharply focused on improving outcomes for children. Strengths and weaknesses in practice are thoughtfully assessed and steps are taken to very successfully improve practice. There is an extremely strong commitment to training and staff development. Staff talk confidently about how training impacts on children's development, such as how they have seen significant progress in children's communication skills by using simple sign language.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is outstanding

Staff are remarkably skilful in their involvement in children's play. They give children uninterrupted time to play independently and know when to interact to extend their learning. For example, staff introduce mathematical concepts to children at the creative table. They talk to them about different shapes and children discuss how they are excited to count down the days to Christmas using numbers on an advent calendar. Children are continually engaged in highly meaningful conversation as staff continue their first-rate support. Staff recognise that they can challenge children's critical-thinking skills even more by giving them more time to answer questions. Detailed, accurate assessments are used extremely well to inform planning and are shared with parents to further support children's excellent progress in all areas of their development.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare are outstanding

Regardless of the weather conditions, children dress appropriately and venture eagerly outside. They choose from a wide variety of highly stimulating resources and enjoy exploring in the wild and natural outdoor area. Children enjoy active, physical play. They bounce around on 'space hoppers' and talk about how this makes their legs strong. Staff encourage more reluctant children to attempt walking over stepping stones unaided, staying close by to offer a helping hand. Children freely select their own books and retreat to quiet areas to relax and share stories with their friends or staff members. Children practise very good hygiene skills. They wash their hands thoroughly with soap and put their rubbish in the bin. Children's behaviour is exemplary. Staff are extremely alert to any changes in behaviour and work closely with parents to address any concerns.

Outcomes for children are outstanding

All children make excellent progress, including those who have special educational needs and those who are in receipt of extra funding. Children have an extensive vocabulary and are confident and independent. They are exceptionally well prepared with the skills they need for their next stage of learning and for school.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY418285
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	1105203
Type of provision	Sessional provision
Day care type	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Registers	Early Years Register
Age range of children	2 - 5
Total number of places	32
Number of children on roll	32
Name of registered person	Wheathamstead Playgroup Limited
Registered person unique reference number	RP530211
Date of previous inspection	14 July 2014
Telephone number	01582 833126

Wheathampstead Playgroup was originally registered in 1980, and re-registered in 2010 when it moved into its current setting. It opens from Monday to Friday during school term time from 8.40am until 3.10pm. The playgroup employs 11 members of childcare staff, eight of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 or above. The playgroup receives funding for the provision of free early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. It supports children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

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