

Inspection of Helpston Playhouse and Under Fives

West Street, Helpston, PETERBOROUGH PE6 7DU

Inspection date: 2 November 2021

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
The quality of education	Outstanding
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is outstanding

Children thrive at this excellent pre-school. They arrive confidently and are eager to start the day. Children greet staff with beaming smiles and are self-assured as they separate from parents and carers. They hang up their coats and show increasing levels of independence and determination as they remove their shoes and put on their slippers.

Children behave exceptionally well. They know what is expected of them and from the start learn how to use sand timers to fairly regulate turn-taking. Children show high levels of respect for each other, staff and the environment. They eagerly share resources with other children. For example, they explain what they are creating with play dough and give part of it to their friends, so they can join in. Children are confident talkers who explain their ideas and feelings clearly.

Children take responsibility for helping to keep the environment safe for their friends. They help to rake and collect fallen leaves which they place in the composting bin. Children know that compost will help plants to grow. They plant, nurture and harvest a wide range of fruit, herbs and vegetables with staff. Children learn about sustainability and that resources, such as water, are precious and not to be wasted.

What does the early years setting do well and what does it need to do better?

- Leadership is extremely strong. Leaders have a clear vision for the pre-school and what they want children to achieve. They have established a clear, broad curriculum that is shared and understood well by staff. The curriculum is carefully sequenced to ensure all children build on what they know and can do to achieve their potential. Staff know children extremely well. They instinctively extend learning as they follow children's interests and lead in play.
- Staff are highly reflective practitioners. They are continuously seeking ways to improve the high-quality learning experiences that children enjoy. Staff share learning and information from training at team meetings to help build and develop practice. For example, recent training has helped staff understand how to adapt their practice well to meet the needs of the youngest children that attend.
- Parents are very positive about the pre-school and staff. They state that their children's needs are well met and that staff have provided useful information to help them understand how to support their child's learning. This includes attending workshops to help them prepare their children for the move to school. Parents feel very well informed about their child's day. Staff kept in contact with parents throughout the COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns. They provided resources and ideas to support children's ongoing learning at home.

- Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children in receipt of additional funding are exceptionally well supported. Staff work closely with parents and other professionals to identify where the additional support will help the individual child. Staff review children's progress in learning to ensure the support is effective. Recent funding has been used insightfully and has successfully enhanced children's communication and language development.
- Staff read stories with great expression, sing songs and rhymes and engage children in meaningful conversation throughout the day. Their speech is clear and highly focused to help children build a rich vocabulary. Children confidently identify and discuss key characters and words and phrases from a range of books and songs. They share their creative thoughts. When they turn around quickly, they say that this makes them 'invisible' and that this is their 'super power'.
- Staff expertly weave mathematical language and concepts as children play. Showing good scissor skill, children compare the lengths of straws they snip when creating play dough cakes. Children count and identify the numbers of the stepping logs in the garden, when they investigate the creatures they find under the logs. They remember that they found four worms the previous day. Children explain knowledgeably why they put the worms in the compost bin.
- Children learn how to keep themselves healthy and safe. Staff talk to children about the benefits of healthy food choices and being active. Children know that drinking milk provides them with calcium, which will help them to be strong. They enjoy dancing, running, crouching and climbing. Staff help children to take measured risks, such as when children climb trees or use the climbing frame.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and staff prioritise children's safety at all times. Staff receive regular training about child protection and safeguarding issues. Leaders encourage staff to discuss safeguarding scenarios and wider issues frequently. This helps staff to keep their knowledge updated. Staff confidently fulfil their role to protect children from harm. They know what to do should they have any concerns about a child's welfare or about staff practice. Leaders follow robust recruitment processes that help to assure the suitability of adults working with children. Staff make effective risk assessments that help to keep the environment safe for children.

Setting details

Unique reference number	256770
Local authority	Peterborough
Inspection number	10072715
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	2 to 10
Total number of places	20
Number of children on roll	92
Name of registered person	Helpston Playhouse and Under Fives Pre-School Committee
Registered person unique reference number	RP907844
Telephone number	01733 253 243
Date of previous inspection	14 March 2016

Information about this early years setting

Helpston Playhouse and Under Fives opened in 1972 and registered again in 1992. The pre-school employs five members of childcare staff. Of these, all staff hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 or 5. The pre-school opens from Monday to Friday during term time only. Sessions are from 9am until 3.15pm, except on Friday when the pre-school ends at 2.15pm. The pre-school provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. The breakfast club opens from 7.30am until 9am each weekday during term time only. The out-of-school club opens from 8am until 9am and 3.15pm until 6pm, except on a Friday when the club opens at 2.30pm during term time only.

Information about this inspection

Inspector
Gail Warnes

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the provider received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the manager and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the provider.
- The manager and the inspector completed a learning walk and discussed the early years curriculum.
- The inspector spoke to children and staff at appropriate times during the inspection.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation of group activities with the manager.
- Parents shared their views of the setting with the inspector.
- The inspector observed the quality of education being provided, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact this was having on children's learning.

We carried out this inspection 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.

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