

Inspection of Harrold Preschool

Harrold Lower School Site, The Green, Harrold, Bedford MK43 7DB

Inspection date: 3 December 2021

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good
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What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

The pre-school staff are welcoming, warm and friendly. Children enter the pre-school enthusiastically and get ready for the start of their morning. Children complete a risk assessment with staff. For example, they check that there are fire extinguishers in different areas of the pre-school. This helps children to understand how to keep themselves safe. Children practice good hygiene as they wipe their noses and clean their hands at the 'snuffle station'. Children concentrate on and explore activities for long periods of time. They fill and empty containers of water and talk about how full they are. Others use rice in the home corner to pretend to make different meals and serve them to each other. Children enjoy playing in the garden and they have access to a range of good resources. Children invite staff into their 'hairdressers'. They talk about what they would like 'doing' with their hair and work together to create the 'do' asked for. This helps children to develop their imaginative skills, using their real-life experiences. Relationships between children are very respectful and they are kind to each other.

Staff create many opportunities for speech and language development. They speak to children face to face to ensure good eye contact. Children have ample time to respond to questions to allow time for thinking. Staff skilfully weave early writing skills throughout the pre-school activities. Children sing songs and move their arms in big movements. They have opportunities to manipulate objects to build up small-muscle strength. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the pre-school remained open for children moving on to school. Staff communicated with all children and families during this time through phone calls and emails, and provided activity ideas. Staff adapt their practice to help children adjust and settle following COVID-19 absences.

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

- Staff create happy, warm and positive relationships with children and their families. Children know they can ask any adult for help when they need it. The key-person system supports good information-sharing between parents and staff about the children. Staff know all of the children within the pre-school well, which helps them to support their learning.
- Parents say they love the pre-school and express how the staff go 'above and beyond' to support their children. Parents explain how the staff deal with queries through swift communication. They know the door is always open for them to speak with staff.
- Staff support children's move to school effectively. Children enjoy school dinners, physical education lessons and assemblies before they start school. Staff work with the local school to provide consistency for children's learning. They meet with teachers to ensure a smooth handover.

- Staff have a good understanding of the group of children attending pre-school. They recognise when an area of learning is not working for the children and adapt it. For example, the children were not using the garden as often as previous groups. Changing the resources, creating more inviting activities, and encouragement has led to children enjoying being outside more.
- Children enjoy opportunities to develop their mathematical skills across the pre-school. Pictured number lines are available in many areas. Staff provide mathematical resources for children to use in different areas, such as the play dough table and the outside area. This supports children to develop their number recognition skills in preparation for school.
- Children solve problems in the small-world area. Using a cardboard pipe and cars, children look for ways to make the cars go faster. When a car gets stuck in the tube, the children find a solution to get it out.
- Staff have good knowledge of children's starting points and next steps in learning. Staff implement planned activities to help children learn successfully. However, they do not consistently support the children's differing abilities in their spontaneous play.
- Where there are children with emerging learning needs, staff identify this swiftly. They gather information from parents and observations while the child is at pre-school. This information is shared with the relevant professionals. The staff use additional funding to help these children make good progress in their learning. For example, they hire a private speech and language therapist to help children make better progress in their communication before starting school.
- The manager has good knowledge of the staff team. They use staff strengths to create the best experience for children. For example, a member of staff enjoys telling and reading stories. They create a 'merry monster' called Malcolm who becomes very poorly. Using this story, the children learn about things we need to do to keep our bodies healthy, including exercise.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff have good knowledge of the signs and symptoms of abuse. They know the referral process to follow if they have a concern about a child. The knowledge staff have about the children's families enables them to make quick decisions to support those who may need extra help and signpost them to the relevant agencies. The team discuss safeguarding regularly and staff have relevant and up-to-date training. Staff fully understand the procedure for raising a concern about the manager or any other member of staff and feel confident in this process. All staff have current paediatric first-aid certificate. This helps to assure children's welfare.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- help staff to better support and engage with children of differing abilities during spontaneous play.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY482171
Local authority	Bedford
Inspection number	10216039
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register
Day care type	Sessional day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	3 to 4
Total number of places	24
Number of children on roll	13
Name of registered person	Harrold Pre-School Playgroup Committee
Registered person unique reference number	RP904686
Telephone number	07929 618244
Date of previous inspection	9 November 2016

Information about this early years setting

Harrold Preschool registered in 1965. It operates Monday to Friday during term time only. Sessions are from 9am until 1pm on Monday, and 9am until 3pm Tuesday to Friday. The pre-school employs five members of childcare staff, all of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 2 or above. The pre-school provides funded early education for three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector
Lisa Smith

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 provider and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the provider.
- The manager and the inspector completed a learning walk together of all the areas of the pre-school and discussed their curriculum and what they want children to learn.
- The inspector talked to staff at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their views. The inspector observed the quality of education being provided indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact this was having on children's learning.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation of a group activity with the manager.
- The inspector spoke to parents during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The inspector looked at relevant documentation and reviewed evidence of the suitability of staff working in the pre-school.

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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