

Inspection of Playschool Nursery Harpenden

The Laurels, 22 Leyton Road, HARPENDEN, Hertfordshire AL5 2HU

Inspection date: 1 February 2022

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

Children enjoy their time at the nursery and are happy and settled. They are building a good understanding of their feelings and are kind to one another. For instance, they help look for favourite toys and hand these to their friends. Children develop independence, for example, as they make decisions about what to play with. They reflect the staff's positive approach and eagerly try new challenges. For example, young children stack wooden blocks and then try to stack wooden pebbles. Children enjoy using the well-planned space. Babies crawl and pull themselves up to standing, helping to develop their physical skills.

Children have good relationships with their peers and with staff. The owners were sensitive to the possible effects of the COVID-19 lockdowns and implemented good procedures to minimise any adverse effects on children's development. For example, they remained in contact with families, provided ideas for home activities and kept up with children's experiences during this time. Children gain a practical understanding of how to keep themselves safe and healthy. They talk with staff about how different foods affect their bodies, and particularly their teeth. Children recognise risks, such as noting that the floor could be slippery following an activity involving flour.

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

- The nursery owners and manager take care to reflect on all aspects of practice and are honest in their evaluations. They act positively to highlight strengths and identify areas for further development. They support staff well, enabling them to develop their skills. For example, short weekly supervision sessions boost staff morale and aid them in quickly highlighting any concerns or training needs.
- The manager supports staff in reviewing the progress of each child, helping to ensure that children make good progress and no child is left behind in their learning. She sensitively considers staff well-being and ensures that staff understand their responsibilities and that their workload is manageable.
- Staff encourage children's enjoyment of books and gently reinforce their learning. For example, toddlers act out sections of a favourite book. They refer to the book and visual prompts as they pretend to serve food at a café. They build on their language skills as they take orders, using words, such as 'menu' and 'special order'. Staff interact well and value children's contributions, such as 'baa-baa sheep tea'.
- Staff make good use of children's interests to help extend their learning. For example, older children show an interest in space and planets. They use reference books to learn about these, develop their creativity as they make rockets, and gain an understanding of mathematical concepts as they talk about

three-dimensional models.

- Children gain an appropriate awareness and appreciation of other ways of life. For example, the family tree displays in each room initiate discussions and staff support children in learning about different family compositions and traditions.
- The manager supports staff in understanding children's experiences and in building on these to help them gain further skills that aid their learning. For instance, children take part in growing vegetables, helping them to understand where their food comes from and what conditions plants need in order to grow.
- Parents speak positively about the nursery and report that they appreciate the good communication, particularly the detailed feedback when they collect their children. Staff support parents to help extend children's learning. They provide information about current topics, so that parents can build on these with their children.
- Most staff, generally, encourage children to explore. For example, toddlers add coloured sprinkles to icing sugar and enjoy feeling the texture of this and making marks. However, on occasion, staff do not fully encourage children to explore and this sometimes limits children's learning in experimenting and finding things out for themselves.
- The setting does not work as effectively as possible with other childcare providers that children attend, to aid them in promoting children's development to the maximum.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

All staff, including agency and bank staff, have a good understanding of safeguarding. They know how to recognise potential signs of abuse and neglect and how to report these to the relevant professional. Regular safeguarding training helps to keep their knowledge up to date. Staff are also aware of wider issues that may affect children's welfare, such as exposure to extreme views and practices. They support children to understand how to access the internet safely, for example, through reading relevant books. The owners ensure that staff ratios are always met and the building is safe and appropriate for children to use, further promoting 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:

- develop staff's understanding of how to consistently support children to explore, experiment and find things out for themselves
- extend the partnerships with other childcare providers caring for the children, to help gain a full understanding of children's development and needs.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY389549
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10217304
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	0 to 4
Total number of places	55
Number of children on roll	43
Name of registered person	Playschool Nursery Ltd
Registered person unique reference number	RP908013
Telephone number	01582 766 674
Date of previous inspection	25 August 2016

Information about this early years setting

Playschool Nursery Harpenden registered in 2009. It is one of three nurseries owned by Playschool Nursery Ltd. The nursery employs 15 members of childcare staff. Of these, nine hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 or above, including two with early years professional status. The nursery opens from Monday to Friday all year round. Sessions are from 7.30am until 6.30pm. The nursery provides funded early education for three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Kelly Eyre

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 this into account in their evaluation of the setting.
- The manager joined the inspector on a learning walk and talked to the inspector about their curriculum and what they want children to learn.
- The inspector observed staff interaction with children during activities indoors and outdoors and assessed the impact this has on children's learning.
- The inspector completed a joint observation with the setting manager.
- Meetings were held between the inspector, the setting owners and manager. The inspector looked at relevant documentation and saw evidence of the suitability of staff.
- The inspector held discussions with staff, children and parents at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their views.

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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