

Inspection of Hartwell Pre-School Playgroup

Hartwell Community Centre, School Lane, NORTHAMPTON NN7 2HL

Inspection date:

2 February 2023

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Inadequate

Leadership and management

Inadequate

Overall effectiveness at previous
inspection

Outstanding

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is inadequate

Children's welfare is potentially compromised, as committee members have failed to ensure that they meet all their legal responsibilities. They have not notified Ofsted of significant changes to the committee. This means Ofsted has not been able to carry out suitability checks on some committee members who have an active role within the pre-school.

Children arrive happy at the pre-school. They settle quickly at activities of their choosing. Staff have built bonds with the children. Children welcome cuddles from staff for comfort when needed, showing they feel safe and secure. Staff remind children to walk rather than run inside, to prevent injury. Staff encourage children to put on their coats and pour their own drinks. Adjustments are made for children who require additional support.

Children freely access the outdoor area. They enjoy racing around on tricycles, smiling as they propel themselves round with their feet. Children develop their physical skills as they practise using scissors to cut paper. However, staff do not challenge children during daily interactions and activities to enable them to make good progress. For example, they are not encouraged to use pedals on tricycles to develop new skills. Staff read familiar stories to children to support their communication and language development. Children join in with phrases they know. However, staff are more concerned with keeping to routines rather than following children's interests. For example, a story being read before lunchtime is swiftly brought to an end, as staff say they need to get ready for lunch.

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

- The committee has not followed the correct procedure to provide Ofsted with information about all members as per the statutory requirements. This means that the suitability of these members has not been checked. Some of these members have been in post for a significant amount of time and take an active part in the running of the pre-school. For example, they are responsible for supporting the manager and discussing safeguarding concerns. This potentially puts children's safety at risk. However, all staff who work directly with children have had their suitability checked.
- The nominated individual does not fulfil her role and has not been actively involved with the pre-school for some time. Other committee members do not fully understand their roles, which leads to confusion about who is responsible for certain tasks. Nevertheless, members of the committee are aware that mistakes have been made and are keen to resolve these.
- The newly appointed manager is passionate about bringing change to the pre-school. She has reflected on how the curriculum is implemented and has put

new ideas in place to ensure children's next steps in learning are supported. However, the curriculum is not ambitious or challenging enough and has not been fully embedded with the staff team.

- Staff report that the manager supports their well-being. She carries out supervisions during which they discuss any concerns about children. However, there is little emphasis on further training and coaching to support staff to improve their practice. This means that staff practice is variable and not at a consistently good standard. The manager has recognised this as an area for development and has plans in place to make improvements. However, these are yet to be implemented.
- Staff know their children well. They offer settling-in sessions to support children's transition to the pre-school. Staff find out information from parents about their children's needs and development. Staff put in place targeted plans to support children with additional needs.
- Staff provide activities that cover all areas of learning and children's interests. Children engage for long periods of time at activities of their choosing. For example, they use their imagination in the role-play area, eagerly showing visitors the dolls. They say, 'baby needs bottle,' as they pretend to feed the dolls. However, for much of the time, staff mainly just play alongside children. Children who are happy to play by themselves have periods of time with no adult interaction at all. Children are not making the progress they are capable of, as staff are not interacting effectively enough to build on what they already know and can do.
- Parents report they are happy with the pre-school. They say their children's needs are catered for and that staff are caring. However, some parents report that they are not given enough information on their children's learning and how they can continue this at home.
- Overall, children behave well. Staff remind children to share toys with each other and to use their manners. However, staff are inconsistent in embedding behaviour expectations. For example, children are not always reminded to wash their hands when they go to the toilet independently, and they are not encouraged to tidy up after themselves.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

The committee does not ensure information about current committee members is shared with Ofsted so that suitability checks can be carried out. Some committee members are privy to confidential information about children and play an active role in the pre-school. This means that children's safety could be compromised. The manager is aware of her role as designated safeguarding lead and who she needs to report concerns to about children or staff. Staff know about different types of abuse and signs and symptoms to look out for that could signal a child is at risk of abuse. Adult-to-child ratios are maintained at all times, and the pre-school is safe and secure.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

To meet the requirements of the early years foundation stage and Childcare Register the provider must:

	Due date
ensure that all committee members undergo suitability checks with Ofsted	03/03/2023
ensure there is a nominated individual in place who understands their role	03/03/2023
ensure all committee members understand their roles and legal responsibilities to the pre-school	03/03/2023
implement an ambitious and challenging curriculum that allows all children to make good progress in their learning	03/03/2023
implement procedures for the coaching and training of staff to support them to raise the quality of education provided.	03/03/2023

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

- improve strategies for sharing information with parents about their children's learning and how they can continue this at home
- support staff to consistently embed behavioural expectations with children.

Setting details

Unique reference number	220223
Local authority	West Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10263229
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 4
Total number of places	24
Number of children on roll	22
Name of registered person	Hartwell Playgroup Committee
Registered person unique reference number	RP522193
Telephone number	07522924733
Date of previous inspection	25 April 2017

Information about this early years setting

Hartwell Pre-School Playgroup is a committee-run pre-school that registered in 2001. It is based in Hartwell, Northampton. The pre-school employs six members of childcare staff. Of these, five hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3. The pre-school opens from Monday to Friday, during term time. Sessions are from 8.45am until 3.15pm. The pre-school provides funded early education for three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Natalie Vaughan Prosser

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 inspector and manager observed activities in the indoor and outdoor learning environments used by children. The manager talked to the inspector about their curriculum and what they want their children to learn.
- The inspector viewed the provision and discussed the safety and suitability of the premises.
- Children spoke to the inspector about what they were doing during activities.
- Parents shared their views with the inspector during the inspection.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation with the manager.
- The inspector observed the quality of education being provided and assessed the impact this was having on children's learning.
- The inspector observed the interactions between staff and children.
- A sample of relevant documentation was viewed by the inspector, including suitability checks.

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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