

Inspection of Heather Playgroup

North Heath Community Primary School, Erica Way, HORSHAM, West Sussex RH12 5XL

Inspection date: 23 February 2024

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Good

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children enter the playgroup with excitement and enthusiasm. They run towards the open arms of the staff, who cuddle them. Children settle very quickly and choose from a variety of activities that engage them. For example, children dress as doctors and pretend to make adults 'better'. Staff explain to children what a thermometer is, and children tell staff that the heart goes 'boomty boom'. Children recall this information later in the garden when they feel each other's chests after exercise. 'It is going faster!', they exclaim.

Children are kind to each other and are very well behaved. Staff set high expectations for good manners. Children politely ask for a snack, saying 'please' and 'thank you' without prompt. They are keen to help tidy away toys and race against the adults who are helping them. Children demonstrate high levels of engagement and show independence when choosing what they want to do. Staff further support engagement, for instance, at snack time, where children learn to cut up their own fruit and use knives for spreading toppings. Children sit amicably with staff and wash the dishes, chatting about past events and talking about what they would like to do in the future.

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

- Children's emotional well-being is well supported. Staff help ease their transition into the nursery by using a variety of strategies and ideas from parents. For example, children bring in toys and photos of family pets that remind them of home. Staff cuddle and reassure children who become upset. They form very strong attachments with children.
- The dedicated managers and staff have created a curriculum based on children's existing knowledge. They have identified that some children need help with understanding their emotions, independence skills and language as a result of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Staff particularly focus on these aspects of children's development to provide them with extra support. Consequently, children are making good progress in these areas.
- Children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language, make good progress in their learning and development and are fully included within the provision. Children learn about the diversity of their community by attending celebrations, such as the Harvest Festival at the nearby church.
- Children are developing good literacy skills. Older children can identify some letters in their names and are beginning to write recognisable letters. Children are motivated and eager to join in when staff read to them. They shout out key words and phrases that are familiar to them. This helps children to develop their language and grow to love books.

- Children enjoy regular opportunities for fresh air and exercise. They run around outside and negotiate an obstacle course that they have made. Children who are at first hesitant to balance on beams are praised for their perseverance by the staff. They beam with pride and ask the inspector, 'Did you see me? Can you watch me again!?' This demonstrates children's high levels of self-esteem.
- Parents compliment the hard-working staff. They say that their children are happy, and the playgroup has a very safe environment for their children to learn in. Parents share information about their children's existing knowledge and skills, and staff comment that they are proud of the positive relationship that they have with parents.
- Staff promote children's welfare very well. They demonstrate a secure knowledge on the actions to take if they have concerns about a child's welfare. The manager uses training, supervisions and staff meetings to ensure that all staff are aware of their responsibilities to safeguard children. Staff teach children how to keep themselves safe. For example, children know how to handle a knife correctly when cutting fruit. They know that when they are eating, they must sit sensibly in a chair to help prevent choking.
- Young children enjoy mixing with older children. They play amicably in the play kitchen, making 'cups of tea' for the inspector. Staff ensure that they are making strong bonds with all children, particularly the youngest children. However, staff do not consistently adapt the learning environment and their teaching to fully support the youngest children and help them make swift progress.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts children's interests first.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- strengthen staff's understanding of how to support younger children to ensure that all children are able to fully benefit from the learning opportunities they provide.

Setting details

Unique reference number	113519
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	10317246
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Day care type	Sessional day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	2 to 4
Total number of places	24
Number of children on roll	23
Name of registered person	Heather Playgroup Committee
Registered person unique reference number	RP522728
Telephone number	01403 262320
Date of previous inspection	10 May 2018

Information about this early years setting

Heather Playgroup registered in 1978. It operates within the grounds of North Heath Primary School, in Horsham, West Sussex. The playgroup employs eight members of childcare staff. Of these, seven hold a recognised childcare qualification at level two and above. The playgroup opens Monday to Friday, term-time only. Sessions are from 8.45am to 2.45pm. The playgroup provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Tina Lambert

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 explained the curriculum intentions to the inspector during the learning walk.
- The inspector took part in discussions with managers and staff during the inspection.
- The manager and the inspector observed and evaluated an activity together.
- The inspector sampled relevant documents and reviewed evidence of the suitability of staff.
- Parents shared their views with the inspector.
- The inspector observed staff and children throughout the day.

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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