

Inspection of Playmates Pre-School

The Institute Hall, Crawley Road, Horsham, West Sussex RH12 4ET

Inspection date: 17 April 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 enjoy their time at the pre-school. They are greeted warmly by staff who listen intently as children talk about what they have been doing at home. Children are very keen to experience the wide range of activities set out for them by the staff. They excitedly chat with the staff and the close bonds that they share are evident. Staff support children and families to settle in very well. Parents and guardians are encouraged to take their time settling their children into the pre-school. This approach supports children's emotional well-being.

Children demonstrate a strong sense of independence in routines such as tidying up, putting their belongings away and collecting their own lunches. This independence is well supported by staff who gently encourage children to try new things and do things for themselves. Staff have high expectations for children's behaviour. They model respectful language, turn-taking and kindness to each other. As a result, children follow their example. They say 'please' and 'thank you' and are keen to help tidy away the toys that they have been playing with. Staff are very ambitious for children's learning and praise children for keeping on trying. Children take pride in their achievements and are keen to learn new things. All children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), progress well from their starting points.

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

- Management at the pre-school is very strong and there is a clear commitment to enhancing the lives of those children who are at risk of falling behind or children with SEND. Staff's well-being is effectively supported and they feel valued and listened to. The manager encourages staff to train further to develop their practice, which helps to continually raise the quality of teaching. Parents describe the manager as 'consistently going above and beyond' and comment that the pre-school is well managed.
- Staff work alongside families and outside agencies to ensure that children are given targeted support. For example, staff regularly liaise with other professionals, such as teachers, speech and language therapists and the local authority. This enables all children who need support to be swiftly identified and to receive the help that they need in a timely manner.
- Staff interact very well with the children. They sing songs, soothe and cuddle those children who become upset. Staff help children recognise and identify their emotions in a variety of ways, such as by using books, toys and discussions. This approach helps children to regulate the way they are feeling.
- Staff plan the environments to support children's physical skills very well. Children competently climb and jump on apparatus. They use tools to scoop up sand and skilfully negotiate trikes around obstacles. Children thoroughly enjoy

their self-directed play in the outside environment. However, during these times, staff do not consistently recognise when children would benefit from intervention to extend their learning and enjoyment. For example, children are often left to play with their friends under staff supervision. Some staff do not take the opportunity to build on children's curiosities by redirecting their play to promote further thinking and problem-solving.

- Staff use children's interests to plan enjoyable activities. For instance, children look at caterpillars and learn new words, such as 'flight' and 'cocoon'. Staff provide resources for children to create their own picture butterflies. They learn to mix colours and quickly know that 'white and red make pink' and 'red and yellow make orange'. Children take pride in their pictures, exclaiming, 'Look! Look at mine. Wow!' Staff praise children for good listening and participation.
- Children's mathematical and literacy skills are supported well. There are endless opportunities to engage in simple mathematics and link sounds to letters throughout the environment. Children are encouraged to 'write' and independently choose from a library of books. However, staff sometimes interrupt children during story time to lead them away to get them ready to go home. Consequently, these children do not get the same experiences as other children.
- Staff demonstrate a commitment to keeping children safe. They understand their obligations and the actions to take should they have concerns about the welfare of a child or are concerned about the behaviour of a colleague. Staff vigilantly supervise children in their play and while eating, to help minimise potential accidents. The pre-school premises are checked for hazards and are always secured.

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:

- support all staff to better recognise, and make more effective use of, spontaneous opportunities to extend and challenge children's learning during their chosen play
- review and improve the organisation of activities and routines so that children's learning is not unnecessarily interrupted.

Setting details

Unique reference number	155340
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	10335283
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	32
Number of children on roll	34
Name of registered person	Playmates Pre-School Committee
Registered person unique reference number	RP906874
Telephone number	01403 258317
Date of previous inspection	11 June 2018

Information about this early years setting

Playmates Pre-School registered in 1988. It operates from a community hall in Horsham, West Sussex. It is open each weekday from 8.50am to 2.50pm during term time. There are five members of staff. Of these, one holds an early years qualification at level 5, and four staff hold an appropriate early years qualification at level 3. The pre-school is in receipt of funding for children aged two, three and four years.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Tina Lambert

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the pre-school 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 inspector completed a learning walk together of all areas of the pre-school and discussed the early years curriculum.
- The manager and inspector spoke about the leadership and management of the pre-school.
- 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.
- The children spoke to the inspector during the inspection and the inspector 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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