

Inspection of Heath Barn Preschool

Thrift Road, Heath and Reach, Leighton Buzzard, Bedfordshire LU7 0AX

Inspection date: 8 July 2025

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

Staff greet children warmly on arrival. The cheerful and relaxed atmosphere ensures that children feel comfortable, and they quickly engage in their chosen activities. These are meaningful to support children to achieve what they need to learn next through their individual interests. All children make good progress from their starting points. Staff know children well and take a genuine interest in each and every child who attends the setting. This helps children to develop strong attachments and a sense of belonging.

Staff help children to resolve minor disagreements, such as sharing popular resources. They calmly remind children to use their 'kind hands'. This supports children to respect others, enabling them to swiftly resume their play harmoniously together. Children demonstrate good critical thinking skills. They experiment using different methods to fill a pipette with water. Staff seamlessly interweave mathematics throughout their interactions with children. This supports children to develop an understanding of quantity, shape, number and measurement. Children are inquisitive. They use magnifying glasses to search for insects and bugs in the garden. Staff support children to build on their language skills. Children thoroughly enjoy joining in with familiar songs and rhymes. Staff's effective use of questions encourages children to think, reflect and articulate their thoughts. Staff work in partnership with the schools that children will be moving on to, aiding a smooth and well-supported transition.

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

- Leaders and staff have designed a well-sequenced curriculum. This places a high priority on preparing children with the necessary skills and knowledge for future learning in readiness for their next stage in learning. Children are independent. They serve their own nutritious snack and know to replace their sun hat in their personalised drawer after playing outdoors. Leaders are yet to consider how to seek information from parents about their children's experiences and achievements at home between the twice-yearly parents' meetings, to inform planning and help embed children's learning. Partnerships with all other settings that children attend are not in place to support children's continuity of learning.
- Outdoors, children joyfully develop their large-muscle skills and learn to assess risks under the close supervision of staff. Children climb on the large wooden pirate ship. They work out how to safely lean over the edge to reach large foam building bricks, which they carefully arrange to create a wall. Staff support children to understand where food comes from. Children plant and nurture a range of fruit and herbs.
- Leaders are reflective and strive for continuous improvement of the pre-school. They place a high priority on the well-being of staff and have successfully

implemented changes to reduce unnecessary workload for staff. Leaders observe staff's practice and complete supervision meetings. However, leaders do not always precisely identify what some staff need support with to raise the quality of teaching to an even higher level. For instance, there are times when staff over-direct children's play, reducing opportunities for independent exploration. Nevertheless, staff have access to training. Recent training has enhanced staff's knowledge of how to help children develop an awareness of good oral health. New knowledge is shared with the whole team to support a consistent approach.

- Children's behaviour is good and appropriate to their stage of development. They listen attentively to staff's clear instructions, which help them to remain safe as they walk from indoors to the inviting outdoor area. Rich activities, such as studying pictures of popular artists' portraits, support children to develop a sense of identity and awareness of emotions. Staff support children to discuss the emotions shown in the portraits. This motivates children to look at themselves in a mirror, experiment with facial expressions and draw their own portraits.
- Parents are very pleased with their children's progress. They describe staff as 'wonderful' and 'friendly'. Staff provide parents with detailed daily verbal feedback on their child's day, as well as written information and photos about their child's development through an online platform. Parents and children's extended family are warmly welcomed to an annual outing with their children. Staff actively foster children's strong love of books in both the pre-school and at home. Children are empowered to choose from a varied selection of books to take home and share with their families, promoting literacy experiences beyond the pre-school.

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:

- enhance partnerships with parents to obtain and build on children's experiences from home
- strengthen partnerships with all other settings that children attend and share detailed information about their development
- focus more sharply on supporting all staff to raise the quality of teaching to a consistently high standard.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY426495
Local authority	Central Bedfordshire
Inspection number	10398343
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	2 to 4
Total number of places	24
Number of children on roll	37
Name of registered person	Heath Barn Pre-School Committee
Registered person unique reference number	RP904856
Telephone number	01525 237172
Date of previous inspection	16 October 2019

Information about this early years setting

Heath Barn Preschool registered in 2011 and is independently run. The pre-school operates from 9am until 3pm, Monday to Friday, during term time only. There are seven staff members who work directly with the children, all of whom hold a relevant childcare qualification at level 3 or above, including the manager who holds early years teacher status. The pre-school provides government funded early years education for all eligible children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Lorraine Pike

Inspection activities

- The inspector and manager completed a learning walk across all the areas of the pre-school to understand how the curriculum is organised.
- A joint observation of an activity was carried out by the lead practitioner and inspector.
- The inspector observed the quality of teaching during activities, indoors and outdoors. She assessed the impact this has on children's learning.
- The inspector held a number of discussions with staff and children at appropriate times during the inspection.
- The inspector held a meeting with the manager. She looked at relevant documentation, such as evidence of the suitability of staff working in the pre-school and committee members.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents and grandparents spoken to on 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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