

Highfield Pre-School

YWAM Oval, Ambrose Lane, Harpenden, Hertfordshire, AL5 4BX

Inspection date	08/10/2013
Previous inspection date	02/03/2009

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	
	Previous inspection:	
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		1
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		1
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		1

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision is outstanding

- The skills and experience of parents, grandparents and the wider community are very positively embraced to provide resources and targeted positive learning opportunities to highly motivate and enthuse all the children.
- Children can freely access an extremely wide range of stimulating toys, activities and equipment. This allows them to actively learn in a spontaneous and fulfilling way so that they make very rapid progress across all areas of learning and development.
- All practitioners very skilfully promote and guide all children's play and activities to move them to the next learning goal in an innovative, imaginative and inspiring way.
- Staff proactively seeks best practice through highly effective methods of monitoring, evaluation and assessment. This underpins the practitioner's dedication to provide all children with a dynamic learning environment, which helps them make excellent progress.

Information about this inspection

Inspections of registered early years provision are:

- scheduled at least once in every inspection cycle – the current cycle ends on 31 July 2016
- scheduled more frequently where Ofsted identifies a need to do so, for example where provision was previously judged inadequate
- brought forward in the inspection cycle where Ofsted has received information that suggests the provision may not be meeting the legal requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage or where assessment of the provision identifies a need for early inspection
- prioritised where we have received information that the provision is not meeting the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and which suggests children may not be safe
- scheduled at the completion of an investigation into failure to comply with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed practitioners and staff in all three group rooms and outside.
- The inspector met with the setting manager.
- The inspector spoke to practitioners, children and parents and took account of their views.
- The inspector looked at children's assessment records, planning documentation, and a variety of policies and procedures.
- The inspector read the setting's self-evaluation and other quality documents and checked practitioner's suitability to work within the setting.

Inspector

Katrina Rodden

Full Report

Information about the setting

Highfield Pre-school opened in 2001 and operates from three rooms in its own building. Children have access to an enclosed outdoor play area. The nursery is situated in a residential area on the outskirts of Harpenden in Hertfordshire. It is open each weekday from 9am to 3pm during term times only.

The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register. There are currently 31 children on roll, some in part-time places. The nursery currently supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

There are seven members of staff, all of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications to at least level 3. One member of staff has Qualified Teacher Status. The setting provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- continue to review and improve the excellent transition process to other settings and school, ensuring children are extremely well prepared for new routines within these settings.

Inspection judgements

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend

The setting is a bright, very welcoming environment that has been carefully set out to provide a superb child-orientated environment with a wide variety of exciting resources. Both inside and outside spaces have highly engaging equipment to motivate the children in all areas of learning. The children are encouraged to bring objects in from home to display on interest tables, which they proudly share with their peers. This helps develop their confidence, language and listening skills extremely well. There are weekly topics for the children to discuss and investigate through group activities and independent exploration and children rapidly become highly enthusiastic and willing learners. Practitioners have an extremely clear understanding of how children learn and provide imaginative and inviting activities that challenge the children's learning and development to help them move quickly to the next stage. Practitioners demonstrate an excellent understanding all areas of learning and development by skilfully directing questions to promote children's curiosity to predict outcomes before they complete a task or

investigation. For example, practitioners frequently ask 'what will happen if...' questions.

Children are actively encouraged to follow their interests and a book is used to display and record spontaneous learning routes to stimulate and challenge the children. For example, on a foggy morning, a child noticed a large spider's web that had been spun on the climbing frame. The children took hoops and chalk outside and eagerly copied the shape of the web within hoops using the chalk on the tarmac path. Practitioners helped the children find spiders and bugs in the garden, which they carefully viewed through magnifying glasses. Photographs were taken and the children's comments and observations were accurately recorded in the discovery book. This innovative practice helps to focus children's learning very well.

Children are split into three groups for part of each session, enabling practitioners to deliver first class age and developmentally appropriate experiences. In addition, all the children learn very effectively while sharing time with one another in the garden or within the building. Practitioners sensitively deploy themselves throughout the setting so that all the children are kept safe, while being supported in their play to enhance their learning experience. One to one time is dedicated to each child, either to carry out a short activity with a practitioner or to read and share a story with a local 'Granny' who visits the setting each week. This critical time has been identified to allow all children to develop relationships and focus on literacy and basic reading skills at an individual level.

All practitioners have very high expectations of the children and they accurately assess prior and continuing knowledge, understanding and skills. Through close observation, practitioners can precisely identify the children's next steps for progression, which enables them to make rapid and focused progress over all areas of learning. The setting has developed its own innovative and highly effective format for recording and tracking the children's progress, which has been identified as an example of best practice and has been shared with other settings in the area.

There is an excellent key person system that builds very strong working partnerships between the setting and all parents and carers. Practitioners rapidly implement targeted strategies and interventions to support all the children's individual needs, including children who have English as an additional language. Practitioners celebrate diversity and inclusiveness with all the children superbly. For example, family culture is embraced as parents bring traditional foods from their country of origin to prepare and share with all the children at snack time. Every child is enthusiastically welcomed at morning registration in their primary language and there are opportunities for all children to learn words and phrases in other languages too. This helps children feel very emotionally secure and they know their own experiences are highly valued by other children and staff.

The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children

All practitioners are extremely receptive to the children's physical, social and emotional needs. By quickly establishing exceptionally strong bonds with their key person and other

practitioners, children form a very secure base to develop confidence to explore and to become independent and motivated learners. Key persons work extremely closely with parents to ensure all children's needs are met at all times. Children are confident to form peer friendships and can manage risk and challenges relative to their age. The highly stimulating environment, with resources accessible at the children's height, further encourages spontaneous and independent learning.

Practitioners consistently give high priority to the children's welfare and give them appropriate tools to help them understand how to keep themselves safe and healthy. For example, puppets are used to 'talk' to the children, asking them who they should talk to if they feel unhappy or worried. There is an extremely proactive approach to healthy routines. For example, to help children to remember how to efficiently wash their hands, they learnt an action poem demonstrating the routine. A healthy snack is provided and all the children can serve their own food and drink. The children enjoy growing a wide variety of fruit and vegetables in the large garden, which they very enthusiastically help to prepare to eat.

Positive behaviour is encouraged extremely well through consistent praise and the children are reminded to care for one another. Unwanted behaviour is discussed with children in age and developmentally appropriate language. Practitioners invite the children to help set 'ground rules' when a new piece of equipment is introduced into the setting. For example, recently, a small pop-up tent was put in the garden for the children to use with the interest boxes. The children were asked to decide how many children should be allowed in the tent at any one time. Through discussion and experimentation the children enthusiastically worked out that four children could sit comfortably inside the tent and that should be the maximum. They took a photograph of four children inside the tent, made a large number '4' and attached this to the outside. The manager commented that this visual clue helps the children to remember the agreement and that the children negotiate between themselves to take turns. This practical example ensures children can see how working together has very positive benefits and the imaginative solution helps consolidate their exceptional behaviour.

Practitioners highly actively encourage all the children to share family experiences. Photographs of siblings are displayed on a special board and their names printed so that they can be involved in finding their names too, just like big brother or sister. Children can share their progress by taking their learning journals home, or they can bring photographs and pieces of art they have created at home to stick in their books. This positively strengthens transition from home to the setting. The setting works extremely closely with schools to promote positive transition for the children. Role play with school uniform is used and visits to the new establishment encouraged. Consideration can be given to extending the excellent arrangements in place to ensure that transitions to other settings are extremely smooth for all the children.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision

There is a highly effective management system that is reflected in the setting's well documented drive to achieve the highest level of delivery of service. This enables all the children to be active, motivated learners within an inspirational environment. The setting has received local authority quality assurance accreditation on a regular basis and has significantly modified the practice of monitoring progress and storage of documents to follow previous inspection recommendations. The setting completes an annual self-evaluation process and proactively reviews the targets set. Recently, the setting completed an Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale inspection. Recommendations have quickly and effectively been followed up, further improving the already excellent learning environment for the children.

Practice is meticulously evaluated by a variety of methods, including self-evaluation, peer and management observations and regular supervision. Continual professional development is encouraged and practitioners can access relevant training courses and workshops to enhance best practice, to further enrich children's learning and development. For example, practitioners have attended training for Forest Schools, to help them plan their delivery of exciting and engaging activities on their many outings to the woods just behind the nursery. Staff meetings focus on the Early Years Foundation Stage, ensuring a targeted delivery to allow all children to make superb progress in all areas of learning.

The setting has established extremely strong relationships with parents and external organisations and providers. Through very effective communication and working partnerships, the setting can quickly identify and address children's individual needs. Parents actively contribute to assess their child's continual development and 'Home/school' books are used for children who travel to the setting by bus, as their parents have limited opportunities to speak to the practitioners face-to-face. The management team proactively seek feedback from parents. There is a parent's committee, which feeds ideas and opinions to the manager and board of trustees. The manager sends all parents a weekly e-mail, letting them know the week's topic and any new information. The setting holds a successful and well attended 'coffee morning' every half term, so that parents can share ideas and concerns with the manager and practitioners. Questionnaires are sent to parents to gain useful feedback over a variety of issues. For example, a feedback form has recently been sent to parents of children who have left to start school. The forms highlight areas that parents feel could help children in transition from the setting. Responses help focus the practitioners to further improve the excellent transition process, creating an extremely positive experience for children and parents alike. All the practitioners have an excellent working relationship with the local children's centre and other settings and actively seek help and advice for specific children or issues as necessary.

The setting has extremely robust safeguarding procedures that are fully understood by all practitioners, students and volunteers. The provision meets all welfare and safeguarding responsibilities as set out within the Early Years Foundation Stage. Consequently, practitioners keep all children safe within the setting and confidently manage any issues when they arise. Students and volunteers receive safeguarding training before they can help in the setting and all staff have been checked for their suitability to work with children using extremely robust recruitment and clearance processes. The lead safeguarding practitioner works in very close partnership with the school Designated

Safeguarding person and the board of trustees to ensure policy updates are fully implemented.

The setting has established a highly comprehensive spread sheet based method for tracking all areas of the children's learning and development. Practitioners find this to be a highly effective tool to ensure any areas of concern are quickly identified and acted upon. Consequently, all children make excellent progress within the setting.

What inspection judgements mean

Registered early years provision

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	Outstanding provision is highly effective in meeting the needs of all children exceptionally well. This ensures that children are very well prepared for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 2	Good	Good provision is effective in delivering provision that meets the needs of all children well. This ensures children are ready for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	Satisfactory provision is performing less well than expectations in one or more of the key areas. It requires improvement in order to be good.
Grade 4	Inadequate	Provision that is inadequate requires significant improvement and/or enforcement action. The provision is failing to give children an acceptable standard of early years education and/or is not meeting the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be inspected again within 12 months of the date of this inspection.
Met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider continues to meet the requirements for registration.
Not met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider does not meet the requirements for registration.

Inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted 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.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY306881
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	873073
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	2 - 5
Total number of places	40
Number of children on roll	31
Name of provider	Kingdom Education Ltd
Date of previous inspection	02/03/2009
Telephone number	01582 463308

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Type of provision

For the purposes of this inspection the following definitions apply:

Full-time provision is that which operates for more than three hours. These are usually known as nurseries, nursery schools and pre-schools and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the higher fee for registration.

Sessional provision operates for more than two hours but does not exceed three hours in any one day. These are usually known as pre-schools, kindergartens or nursery schools

and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the lower fee for registration.

Childminders care for one or more children where individual children attend for a period of more than two hours in any one day. They operate from domestic premises, which are usually the childminder's own home. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Out of school provision may be sessional or full-time provision and is delivered before or after school and/or in the summer holidays. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. Where children receive their Early Years Foundation Stage in school these providers do not have to deliver the learning and development requirements in full but should complement the experiences children receive in school.

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