

Mad Hatters Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number EY386995
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Inspector Anna Davies

Setting address Hatton Park Cp School, Hattons Park, Longstanton,
CAMBRIDGE, CB24 3DL
Telephone number 07890 335 223
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Type of setting Childcare on non-domestic premises

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

The provider must provide a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must provide a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Childcare (Inspection) Regulations 2008 regulations 9 and 10).

Description of the setting

Mad Hatters Pre-School has been established for 28 years and re-registered under the Pre-School Learning Alliance (PLA) in 2008. The pre-school is a Direct Service Provision of the PLA. It operates from a community room within Hatton Park County Primary School in Longstanton, Cambridgeshire. Children have access to an enclosed outdoor play area. The group opens five days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 09.00 until 11.30 with a lunch club until 12.30 and also from 12.30 until 15.00 from Monday to Thursday. On Fridays the setting opens from 09.00 until 12.30. Access into and out of the pre-school is at ground level and there are disabled toilet facilities.

The pre-school is registered on the Early Years Register. A maximum of 26 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. There are currently 41 children aged from two to under five years on roll. The pre-school currently supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities as well as children who speak English as an additional language.

There are four members of staff, three of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications to at least National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) Level 2 and one member of staff is working towards a recognised qualification. The setting provides funded early education for three and four-year-olds.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good. Children are very happy and make good progress in all areas of learning, staff value the uniqueness of each child and build good relationships with them and their families. Staff provide a stimulating range of activities both indoors and outdoors to engage children's interests and effectively support their learning and development. The registered person, manager and staff are committed to continually improving the provision and have effective systems in place to identify future areas for development.

Policies, procedures and records are used effectively to underpin arrangements to safeguard children's health and welfare. Secure partnerships with parents enable staff to meet children's individual needs and ensure that they are kept well informed of their children's care and learning.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- review and improve the organisation of snack time to enable children to make independent choices about when they wish to eat and to ensure that this is a fair system for all
- provide further opportunities for children to develop cultural awareness and value diversity, this relates to using images reflecting diversity in the setting

and providing further opportunities for children to use their home language in their play and learning.

To fully meet the specific requirements of the EYFS, the registered person must:

- take all reasonable steps to ensure that hazards to children are kept to a minimum, this specifically relates to ensuring that children are unable to leave from the door in the main room into the corridors of the school unsupervised (Suitable premises, environment and equipment).

14/07/2009

The leadership and management of the early years provision

Robust recruitment procedures and a clear commitment to ongoing training ensure that children are well cared for by a suitable team of staff. High staff ratios ensures that children receive good levels of adult support and attention. The staff team work closely with their management team at the Pre-School Learning Alliance in order to actively promote and further develop the good quality care and education for all children. Staff have a very positive attitude to liaising with other providers delivering the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and they have taken positive steps to forge close links in order to further support children's care and learning.

The setting works closely in partnership with parents and carers to ensure children's individual needs are fully met. There are good opportunities for parents to share information about their children with staff in order that they can effectively support children's welfare, learning and development. For example, an 'Interests and views from home' display enables parents to contribute their own observations of their children's learning and interests at home which means that staff are able to plan activities accordingly. Parents are encouraged to share what they know about their child and to become involved in their child's learning. For example, they can join the parents rota, visit the setting to share their particular talents, job roles or cultural traditions or make use of the parents forum to make suggestions about the future development of the setting and to become involved in fundraising. Parents speak highly of the setting, the activities offered to their children and the positive impact on their children's social and personal development.

Secure systems are in place to monitor and evaluate the provision to identify priorities for improvement and this has had a positive impact on the overall quality of the provision. For example, the registered provider, manager and staff have focused on developing the planning and assessment procedures to promote individualised learning and have clear plans for the future such as developing the story corner and range of outdoor activities to include digging and gardening areas. Clear and detailed policies and procedures underpin the good practice at the setting. Staff demonstrate a good knowledge and understanding of safeguarding children and are proactive in helping children to understand how to keep

themselves safe. For example, they talk about crossing roads safely during role play, take part in formulating their own 'safety circles' and are reminded about the safe use of equipment such as knives and scissors. The environment is generally very safe and secure and staff are careful to fully supervise children at all times, for example, when parents are dropping off or collecting their children. However, whilst the security of the door in the main room has been identified and assessed as a potential risk to children's safety if they were to leave the room and wander unsupervised in the school corridors, appropriate action has not yet been taken to fully minimise this risk.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Children are relaxed and confident in the care of the staff. They are developing good self-esteem because staff value their thoughts and contributions; staff know the children and their families well and this gives the children a strong sense of belonging. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported; staff actively work with parents and other agencies to support the children's needs and this ensures that they are fully included in the life of the setting. Children begin to know about their own cultures and those of others. Although practitioners value diversity, children learning English as an additional language have fewer opportunities to use their home language in the setting and resources such as positive images are not always used effectively to further support children's understanding about the society they live in.

Staff demonstrate a good knowledge and understanding of how children learn; they use questioning effectively to support and extend children's learning and make good use of spontaneous learning opportunities, for example, when children start talking about their families, things they spot in their environment or when they begin experimenting with sounds and letters. Planning is based on children's interests and next steps of learning, which ensures that every child is challenged and enjoys taking part. Children's 'Learning Journeys' record regular observations and show the good progress that children are making in their learning and development.

Children are able to recognise their first and surnames as they self-register when they arrive by placing their name tag on their pegs. They confidently express their own ideas, for example, as they describe the cornflour and water mixture as 'gritty' and enjoy solving problems such as how to connect a train track together using 'straight' and 'curvy' pieces in the right places and how to share the trains out equally with their friends. Children enjoy sharing stories and especially in the 'story den' created outside. They have regular use of a computer where they confidently use a mouse to make their on-screen selections. Children use digital cameras, programmable and remote controlled toys, these activities help to develop children's skills and interest in information technology. They confidently talk about the places that they and their families have visited, demonstrating a knowledge of the world around them. These simple activities lay the foundations to support the children's future economic well-being. Children explore their creativity in a range of art, craft and exploratory activities that stimulate their imagination; they enjoy feeling the cornflour and water mixture and watching it run through their fingers.

Practitioners provide free-flow opportunities for children to enjoy energetic play in the attractive outdoor area. Children confidently practice a range of movements, such as crawling through a tunnel, balancing on a beam or negotiating drawn out roadways in their sit and ride vehicles and scooters. Children's behaviour is good, they are encouraged to share and are able to spontaneously think about others. They use good manners and staff praise and acknowledge their efforts such as when they exclaim 'I want to pour it myself'. Children enjoy healthy snacks provided by the setting and packed lunches provided by parents for the lunch club; clear information is gathered about children's dietary requirements and this ensures they can eat safely. However, the organisation of snack times does not always enable children to choose when they wish for a snack and is not currently organised effectively to ensure it is a fair system for all. For example, children are told when they can sit at the table and some are turned away from the table if there are too many, even though they have requested a snack. Most staff hold current first aid certificates, which mean that they can respond appropriately if children have an accident whilst in their care.

Annex A: record of inspection judgements

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

Overall effectiveness

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	2

Leadership and management

How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	2
How effective is the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement?	2
How well does the setting work in partnership with parents and others?	2
How well are children safeguarded?	2

Quality and standards

How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?	2
How well are children helped to stay safe?	2
How well are children helped to be healthy?	2
How well are children helped to enjoy and achieve?	2
How well are children helped to make a positive contribution?	2
How well are children helped develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	2

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