

Merry-Go-Round Under 5's

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspection date	17/07/2012
Inspector	Alison Reeves
Setting address	Hartsfield JMI School, Clothall Road, Baldock, Hertfordshire, SG7 6PB
Telephone number	01462 896322
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Type of setting	Childcare - Non-Domestic

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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*.

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Description of the setting

Merry-Go-Round Under 5's registered in 1989. It operates from a double classroom in the grounds of Hartsfield JMI School in Baldock, Hertfordshire. Children have access to two outdoor areas. The setting is open each weekday from 8.45am to 11.45am and from 12.30pm to 3pm, with a lunch club Monday to Thursday between 11.30am and 12.45pm during term time.

The setting is registered on the Early Years Register. A maximum of 22 children may attend the setting at any one time. There are currently 56 children on roll, who attend for various sessions. The setting supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language.

There are nine members of staff working with the children, including the manager, and an additional three for lunch club cover. All members of staff have relevant early years qualifications.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are well supported and benefit from a team of enthusiastic staff who have a clear understanding of each child's specific needs. Children are valued as individuals, with a general balance of child-led and adult-led learning. Children are making good progress towards the early learning goals, appropriate to their age and ability. Policies and procedures are implemented effectively to promote children's welfare and safety. Relationships with parents and other providers are very positive, however some opportunities for parents to contribute to children's learning is not fully maximised. Self-evaluation is now embedded and plans for the future are well targeted to bring about further improvement although the views of children could be used better to inform improvements.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- increase parents' opportunities to contribute to their child's learning by improving access to learning journey books
- increase the focus on child-led activities, building on the success of recent improvements
- develop further self-evaluation to enhance how the views of children impact positively on the further development of the setting.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children are safeguarded and well protected because all staff have a detailed understanding of child protection issues. This means they are confident in following procedures if there are concerns about a child's welfare. Policies and procedures are updated and implemented consistently. Therefore, children's safety and well-being are secured. The risk assessment covers all of the premises and outdoor areas. This ensures children play and learn in an environment where steps are taken to promote their safety.

Staff have good knowledge of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Training has enhanced their knowledge and has been used to provide a more child-led environment in most sessions; however, this is not consistently promoted across all sessions. Several staff are training to improve their qualifications, and this has enhanced their confidence and understanding of early years practice. The environment is bright and attractive with lots of the children's work on display. Well-labelled storage enables children to select the resources for themselves and this supports their independence. By expanding into the second classroom, staff have provided more space for children to play and a wider range of activities are available. This means children are able to make good progress in their learning and development.

The staff team have established a system for reflection and self-evaluation that helps them to identify their strengths and weaknesses. They use a number of strategies to aid the process. A clear action plan sets appropriate and challenging targets. Prompt action has been taken to address the actions and recommendations from the last inspection, and as a result there has been a significant improvement in the setting's organisation and outcomes for children. The staff use the self-evaluation systems to seek the views of parents and include these when evaluating. They also collect information from the children but this is included less successfully and their views have only some impact on improving the setting and target setting.

The staff team form effective relationships with parents and carers. They work together sharing vital information about the children from the outset. This means staff plan appropriately to support children settling at the setting. They know children's starting points and therefore individual needs are effectively met. Parents are informed and generally involved in their child's learning, and a small number make contributions to achievement records. However, the storage of the learning journey books means parents do not have free access to these and this limits their opportunity to make contributions and comments. Parents say how highly they regard the staff, who provide good experiences for the children. They find staff approachable and enthusiastic about their work. They say it is a pleasure to come into the setting, that staff know children well and are good at adapting to children's needs and interests. Well-established relationships with other professionals involved with children enable staff to work more effectively to meet specific needs. Staff have been involved in securing funding to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and have worked to make

transitions to school as smooth as possible for the children.

Staff offer an inclusive environment, adapting activities and using communication tools, such as signing, to make sure every child is taking advantage of all they have to offer. By planning for individuals and readily adapting activities, each child is helped to make good progress across all the areas of learning.

The quality and standards of the early years provision and outcomes for children

Children are happy and settled in the setting. Close relationships with staff mean they feel secure and confident to explore and try new things. They develop a good understanding about their own safety because staff take them on trips in the local community where they can put their knowledge of road safety to the test. Staff invite the local police and fire service to visit, giving the children first-hand experiences of the large emergency vehicles, some of the equipment and the uniforms. Plenty of outdoor learning supports children's health and well-being. The children enjoy being outdoors. They make the most of the equipment to develop their body control as they balance on the low-level linked blocks, dig in the sand and build castles. The children demonstrate their hand control as they spend time writing and drawing, inside and in the garden. The colourful chalk drawings on the ground show that children can recreate what they have seen. There are plenty of flowers and lots of arrows pointing towards the car wash. This popular activity has children vigorously washing the large toys cars with plenty of water. Staff link the activity to children's own need to wash. As a result, children are healthy, active and have a secure understanding of how and why we clean things.

Children are active learners who are able to make choices about what they do. They show good levels of concentration and perseverance when drawing detailed pictures of a boat on a river or building a house or tower with the large soft blocks. At groups times children listen attentively and share their experiences with the group. Communication skills are good and the use of signing means everyone is included. Children love books and regularly explore the book area independently and with staff. Their love of rhymes and singing is used well to promote language development. Children are confident in counting and writing numbers, and use these skills in their play. They are also familiar with technology, operating the computer and push-button toys. Staff frequently observe children, taking lots of photographs to illustrate their progress and achievements. The information from assessments is being used to plan further activities that help children to continue in their achievements. This means all children are making good progress across all areas of learning.

Children behave well and staff support this by helping children to understand behaviour boundaries and have high but realistic expectations of all children. By focusing on playing together, turn taking and sharing, staff are helping children to get along together. The resources and good quality display materials help children to learn about diversity and different cultures.

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

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	2

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	2
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding	2
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	2
The effectiveness of partnerships	2
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	2

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	2
The extent to which children feel safe	2
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	2
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	2

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