

Highmore Hedgehogs

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	223537
Inspection date	10/03/2009
Inspector	Deborah Ball
Setting address	Westfields Community Hall, Highmore Street, HEREFORD, HR4 9PG
Telephone number	01432 273861
Email	
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 report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration whichever is the later, which require Ofsted or the provider to take action in Annex C.

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).

The setting also makes provision for children older than the early years age group which is registered on the voluntary and/or compulsory part(s) of the Childcare Register. This report does not include an evaluation of that provision, but a comment about compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Register is included in Annex B.

Description of the setting

Highmore Hedgehogs Pre-School is a committee run group that was registered in 2000. It operates from Westfields Community Hall, in the city of Hereford. Children have access to two designated playrooms with associated facilities and there is a fully enclosed area available for outdoor play. The building has ease of access, with all facilities used by the children on the ground floor.

The pre-school opens five days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 09:15 until 12:00 on Mondays and Thursdays and from 09:00 until 15:00 on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays. Children are able to attend for a variety of sessions and a lunch club is available. The group also runs a holiday play scheme for four weeks during the holidays, for children aged from three to eight years. A maximum of 24 children may attend the setting at any one time. There are currently 44 children attending who are within the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Of these, 24 children receive funding for early years provision. The provision is registered by Ofsted on the Early Years Register and compulsory part of the Childcare Register. The pre-school supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also supports children who speak English as an additional language.

There are eight members of staff who work with the children, seven of whom hold appropriate qualifications and experience in early years education. One member of staff is currently working towards an appropriate qualification, while the joint managers have recently upgraded their existing qualifications by completing foundation degrees. The setting receives support from the local authority.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good. Children are provided with consistently very good quality care, support and encouragement from practitioners who are very obviously committed to promoting an exciting, happy and motivating learning space. Effective systems are in place which ensures a safe, secure and well-maintained environment where children are nurtured and enabled to make good progress towards the early learning goals. Policies, procedures and other documentation are detailed, thorough and in good order, reviewed regularly and truly reflect the good practice evident in the daily routine. The staff are developing some systems to foster a strong partnership with parents and are proactive in developing links with agencies and other providers to support children's progress. Careful reflection ensures that plans for the future are well targeted to bring about further improvement to the provision and outcomes for children.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- support the partnership with parents by continuing to develop systems for

- involving all in the assessment of their child's progress
- ensure that the risk assessment is rigorous and covers anything that a child may come into contact with.

The leadership and management of the early years provision

The leadership and management of the setting is consistently strong and has a beneficial impact on the organisation of space and the good quality care and learning opportunities afforded to all children. Access to training and continual review of the systems in place ensures that practitioners are able to apply any knowledge learned and new ideas into the daily routine. For example, staff have accessed training and support in order to implement an effective system for ongoing assessment and planning in relation to the EYFS. This means that practitioners are able to plan activities using their knowledge of children's individual needs, likes and preferences and are proficient in using assessments to plan for children's next steps. The arrangements for self-evaluation are effective in identifying strengths and weaknesses and are used together with findings from any other quality checks to devise actions that lead to improvement. This has been particularly evident in the provision for free-flow play. Recommendations made at the last inspection have been addressed which further demonstrates the setting's capacity for continuous improvement.

A comprehensive range of written policies and procedures, required for the safe and efficient management of the setting, are consistently implemented by staff to promote children's health, welfare and safety. Written risk assessments are in place relating to most of the premises, toys, equipment and activities and these help to ensure children's safety both in and out of the premises and whilst on outings. However, some potential hazards within the premises have not been included, therefore, the risks have not been fully assessed. Children are safeguarded because the staff have a good understanding of child protection issues. Staff are able to identify possible signs and symptoms of potential abuse or neglect, have accessed relevant training and know the procedures to follow in the event of a concern being raised. All policies and procedures to promote child protection are in line with guidance from the Local Safeguarding Children Board.

The basic information required to meet children's individual needs is gathered prior to them starting at the setting. Effective settling-in procedures promote confidence and emotional security in the children, which enables parents to feel reassured. Parents are provided with good information about the setting through access to policies and procedures, newsletters and display boards. Staff make time at the beginning and end of the day to provide parents with opportunities to informally discuss their children's progress, achievements and recent experiences. However, the arrangements for incorporating parental information into children's assessment records are at an early stage and not yet fully effective for all children. The setting has suitable procedures in place to liaise with local schools, additional settings that the children may attend and other professional agencies. This helps to promote continuity of care for the children and fosters a consistent approach to their learning.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Children are provided with stimulating indoor and outdoor play opportunities in a well-presented learning environment. The staff have a sound understanding of how to implement the EYFS requirements and plan exciting, purposeful activities based upon children's interests and ideas. This encourages their participation and inspires curiosity and as a result, children are making good progress in all six areas of learning and development. A good balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities ensure that children are appropriately challenged and have some independence and control over their learning. This helps to excite and sustain the children's interest, motivates them to become active learners and consequently, they have a positive attitude towards learning. Attractive displays of their work also help to promote the children's self-esteem and confidence. Good quality toys, equipment and resources are stored accessibly so that the children can exercise independent choice and decision-making throughout the day. Observational assessment of children's developing skills and achievements is consistently recorded and matched to the expectations of the early learning goals and is used to inform activity planning.

The provision for open-plan, free-flow learning and child-initiated experiences works very well for children and staff. Children are able to explore, investigate and extend their learning within a well-organised, smoothly operated system which supports them very well in their learning and development. Children enjoy exploring sensory resources, developing role play, investigating the dressing-up clothes, baking activities, developing their language skills, calculations, developing an understanding of how things work, working collaboratively and critical thinking. The children have a keen interest in the wider world around and they explore a range of activities such as performing a dragon dance during Chinese New Year.

Children have good opportunities to access the outdoor play area. Staff use this space well and have highlighted the space as an area that they can develop further to fully meet children's physical development and overall enjoyment of an outdoor learning space. Children get plenty of fresh air as they climb, balance, pedal and co-ordinate their bodies outside. They use magnifying glasses and binoculars and enjoy flying kites made out of carrier bags and string. Children excitedly jump up and down on the lawn to bring worms to the surface and place them in the wormery to enable them to study worms in their natural habitat. Staff have implemented good systems to encourage children to eat a balanced diet, even though most food is provided by parents. For example, they encourage parents to provide healthy lunch boxes, sit with children to encourage them to eat well and promote healthy eating through topics and cooking activities.

Children enjoy a colourful, interesting and exciting learning environment. There is a strong sense of happiness and contentedness within the pre-school and this is evident when staff and children sing songs frequently throughout the day and enjoy a wide range of activities together. Staff show a strong commitment to maintaining a happy, caring and enjoyable environment. The smiles and animated expressions on the faces of children show that this commitment is benefiting all

children and enabling them to make good progress in their learning and development.

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

Any complaints about the inspection or report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

Annex B: the Childcare Register

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are:

Met

Annex C: complaint/s made to Ofsted

This section of the report includes details of any complaint/s made to Ofsted when:

- we took action for the provider to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register; or
- we asked the provider to take action in order to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register; or
- the provider had already taken any necessary action to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register.

We will not report on any complaint where the provider met the requirements of the Early Years Register or did not require any action by Ofsted or the registered provider.

Detail of the complaint/s

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since the last inspection.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.