

Heatherside Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	120065
Inspection date	19 April 2007
Inspector	Nicola Hill
Setting Address	Heatherside Community Centre, Martindale Avenue, Camberley, Surrey, GU15 1BB
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Registered person	Heatherside Pre-school
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Sessional care

ABOUT THIS INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality of childcare and, if applicable, of nursery education. The inspection was carried out under Part XA Children Act 1989 as introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000 and, where nursery education is provided, under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004; the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding; and, where nursery education is provided, the *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration or 1 April 2004 whichever is the later.

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

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

Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

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THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Heatherside Pre-School has been in operation since the early 1980's. It is a committee run pre-school operating from Heatherside Community Centre in Surrey. The pre-school consists of two separate groups under this registration. Group one operates in the main hall, known as the 'Hall', and group two operates from two rooms within the same building, known as the 'Rooms'. Children attend either the Hall or the Rooms. Suitable toilet and kitchen facilities are available for both groups.

The pre-school serves the needs of families in the area and the local community. The group is registered to care for a maximum of 48 children aged between two and under five years. There are currently 41 children on roll at the Rooms. This includes 19 funded three-year-olds and 14 funded four-year-olds. There are 33 children on roll at the Hall, including 16 funded three-year-olds and 15 funded four-year-olds. There is one child currently attending with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and four children speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school is open term time only. The Hall operates each weekday morning from 09.05 to 11.45. There are two full-time and four part-time staff currently working with the children.

The Rooms also provides morning sessions Monday to Friday from 09.05 to 11.45 and afternoon sessions on Wednesdays and Fridays from 13.35 to 16.15. There are three full-time and three part-time staff currently working with the children. The pre-school is accredited by the Pre-School Learning Alliance and is a member of a cluster group, centred on the local infants school.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are accommodated in premises that are clean and comfortable. Staff are good role models and protect children from infection through good hygiene routines throughout each session, such as cleaning tables before snack with anti-bacterial spray. Children are learning to manage their own personal hygiene effectively. They independently wash their hands after messy play activities and use wipes before snack. Staff give assistance as needed with toileting, and posters are on display in the toilets reminding children of the procedure to follow, which reinforces children's awareness of the importance of self-care and how to look after their bodies. Good medication and first aid procedures keep children safe at all times, and staff have good arrangements for when a child becomes unwell during the session, which helps to prevent the spread of infection. Parents provide written consent for emergency medical treatment. Most staff are first aid trained, which ensures there is always at least one first aid qualified staff in attendance at both groups.

Children do not currently have access to an outdoor play area at this pre-school. However, staff provide good opportunities for children to experience physical play and develop good control and co-ordination over their bodies. Designated areas are set up with physical play equipment each day in both the Hall and the Rooms so that children have daily opportunities to experience vigorous activity and develop skills, such as bouncing on the trampoline, throwing balls through targets, using a variety of wheeled toys and climbing up and over the A-frame. Staff also provide music and movement sessions, exercise sessions, parachute games and invite outside agencies, such as a football coach, to help the children experience a wide range of activities. Children also have plenty of opportunities to go outside as staff take them on walks, and visit the local school to use the playing fields and go pond dipping.

Children enjoy a good range of snacks to help promote healthy eating. A variety of fresh and dried fruits is served each session, with a choice of water or milk to drink. Children go in small groups to take a break for snack, ensuring activities can continue without disruption. Snack time is well-organised and a lovely sociable occasion with children chatting happily amongst themselves and with staff. Staff ensure that they meet children's individual dietary requirements because they seek relevant information from parents. Drinking water is available to the children throughout each session, which helps them to understand that taking regular drinks maintains their health. They also learn about healthy eating and different foods through topic work, making fruit salads and soups, and tasting new foods when celebrating different cultural festivals.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a welcoming, secure and safe environment. The setting is a pleasant place for children to spend their time as staff set out activities and resources in the Hall and

the Rooms before children arrive, and display the children's art work as much as possible. Children enter the setting confidently and with ease at the beginning of each session. They have sufficient space to freely move around the premises and explore their boundaries in safety. Staff organise the space well, providing suitable areas for children to play, rest and enjoy messy activities. Children benefit from the wide range of resources set out for them each day. These are regularly changed to make sure children remain interested and have a good range to choose from. Staff check the equipment is clean and in good order each day.

Children's safety is well promoted as staff conduct daily, comprehensive risk assessments and take relevant action to minimise risks. Both the Hall and the Rooms are secure to prevent children leaving without supervision or unauthorised persons having access. All visitors to the groups are recorded and staff supervise children at all times to ensure their safety. Children are able to develop some awareness of their own safety within the pre-school, as staff talk to them about safety issues, such as how to use the A-frame and slide correctly. Staff are also careful to remind parent helpers about safety within the setting. However, staff do not regularly practice emergency evacuation procedures with the children to ensure they have a confident understanding of fire safety.

Children are well protected as all staff have a clear understanding of their duty to ensure children remain safe and their responsibility should they have a concern about a child's welfare. They know how to implement local child protection procedures and have the required policies and documents in place to safeguard children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

All the children enjoy attending the pre-school. They are happy and relaxed in the care of the staff teams in both the Hall and the Rooms and settle quickly to play with their friends. Children know the routine well as both groups start with a circle time. All the children are included, with many bringing in items for show and tell, relating to the letter of the week or the current theme. Staff show interest in each item children have brought in, valuing their contributions. Children are confident to move around the different areas of the pre-school and make their own selection about what they want to play with. Staff are always on hand to support children as needed and develop learning opportunities as they arise.

An effective keyworker system is in place, which secures the links between home and pre-school and enables the children's individual needs to be met. Younger children who are not in receipt of nursery funding are well supported. They enjoy a variety of different activities and experiences that have regard for all areas of their development. Staff make effective use of the Birth to three matters framework to adapt the activities and experiences they provide for the younger children and to record their development. Younger children enjoy messy play with materials such as sand, water, playdough and jelly. They show their creativity as they crayon over stencils and paint large murals on sheets of paper attached to the wall. One child admires how pretty their paintings look. Children excitedly join in songs and rhymes and listen intently to stories. They receive plenty of praise and reassurance from staff and participate fully with their peers at the setting.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are happy and secure in the nursery environment and they display positive attitudes towards play and learning. They are motivated

and keen to participate in the wide range of activities provided each day. Children are making friends and are learning to share and take turns as they play. They play well independently and co-operate well with others when working in a group, such as creating a runway together for the remote control aeroplane. They develop good levels of independence as they attend to personal hygiene without reminders from staff. Children are developing good communication, language and literacy skills. They chatter happily as they play and work with the adults, knowing they will listen to them and value what they say and do. They confidently talk in large groups about the items they have brought in for show and tell and respond well to open ended questions posed by staff. Children are developing their use of language as they are encouraged to recognise rhyming words in poems. They listen intently with obvious enjoyment to well-told stories and have good opportunities to practise emergent writing, with many writing their own names.

Children learn about numbers and calculation through practical experiences such as rhymes and action songs. They are encouraged to count how many children are present at circle time and then think about whether there are more girls or more boys. Children are also beginning to use mathematical language as they take part in activities, such as measuring their heights and weighing items in scales. One child recognises that different amounts of toy figures placed in each end of the scales makes a difference in weight. Children talk about their ages and recognise and name colours and shapes. They are developing a good knowledge and understanding of the world through a range of interesting activities provided at the setting, such as cooking, going pond dipping, investigating how they grow and inviting visitors to the setting, such as the lollipop lady, a nurse and people from the fire brigade and the army. Staff talk to children about the date and the weather at circle time and children show a good understanding of this; one child comments that she has her 'Wednesday socks' on. Design and construction is practised as children make models and build with a range of construction sets and junk materials. They competently use a computer to play games and use other technological equipment such as tape recorders and remote control toys.

All the children move confidently around the pre-school, demonstrating good spatial awareness. They enjoy physical activity and have good opportunities to reinforce and develop their skills using a range of equipment. Children's fine motor skills are also developing well as they competently use a range of tools which require hand-eye coordination, such as stencils, scissors and musical instruments. Children's natural creativity is developing well. They explore a range of craft materials and make lovely paintings and pictures of themselves. Children show good imagination as they participate in role-play in a variety of situations, such as the café, the art shop and the doctor's surgery. They enjoy taking part in familiar and favourite action rhymes and songs and respond well to different musical sounds such as classical music.

Staff have a well developed understanding of how children learn through free play and practical experiences. They use their knowledge and understanding to plan and organise interesting activities to extend children's learning, and consequently, children are making good progress towards the early learning goals. The planning is topic based and covers all areas of the curriculum equally. Staff know the children well and generally adapt the activities and experiences they plan, ensuring effective support or challenge is provided to all children. However, some daily written plans for structured activities do not always show differentiation, and therefore it would not always be clear to covering staff or volunteers, how some planned activities within the setting can be extended or simplified. All staff contribute to making observations on the children's achievements. These are then passed on to the child's keyworker who regularly updates the children's developmental records. This good system enables staff to clearly identify children's individual learning targets and ensure they are continually making progress.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children receive a warm welcome and staff know them well. All children are treated as individuals with staff understanding their personalities, likes and dislikes and specific needs. Staff value all the children's contributions at circle time when they bring items for show and tell, and display the children's artwork, which helps them feel a sense of belonging. The setting fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Children are learning about the wider world and our diverse society as they play with a good range of resources promoting positive images, such as books, dolls and puzzles. One child thoroughly enjoyed dressing up in a beautiful traditional African costume and used this to extend her imagination during role-play with friends. Children's learning is developed further as they take part in projects, learning about different countries and festivals. There are sound procedures in place to ensure that the individual needs of children speaking English as an additional language are met. Children with a disability or learning difficulties also receive good support from their keyworker, and the staff team in general, as they are fully included in the range of activities with their peers. Advice is taken from other professionals to ensure the children are helped to make appropriate progress in partnership with their parents.

Children's behaviour is good. This is because staff understand and implement the positive behaviour management policy consistently. As a result, children know what is expected of them and respond appropriately to gentle reminders when given, such as helping to tidy up. Children play harmoniously together and have good manners. Older children confidently talk about the rules, for example, they know that they must let another child have a turn on the computer when the timer runs out. Staff act as good role models, they talk calmly to the children and gently help younger children to learn about the boundaries of acceptable behaviour.

Staff have good relationships with the parents, who speak highly of the group, particularly in relation to how friendly and approachable the staff are, the variety of activities provided and that the children learn in a fun way. Staff take time to talk and listen to parents about their children and many parents actively sign up to the 'Parent Helper' rota to help out when they can during sessions. Many enjoy this as they feel they get to take part in what their children are doing and experience what happens within the group. New parents are positively welcomed to the nursery. They are invited to an open day and receive plenty of information about the pre-school and the Foundation Stage curriculum. Staff also offer a service of visiting children in their own homes, which helps both the children and their parents feel more secure when they start.

The partnership with parents and carers of children receiving nursery education is good. They are kept informed about the curriculum and activities their child is involved in each week through plans displayed on the notice board. Staff also encourage parents to support their children at home by suggesting activities they might like to try, and items to find that relate to the theme or the letter of the week. This benefits the children because it enables parents to feel more involved and to share in their children's learning. Parents are invited to share information about what their child can do on entry, however, this information does not relate sufficiently to the different aspects of their development in order for staff to gain a clear picture of children's starting points in relation to the stepping stones. Parents are kept well informed about how their child is progressing by viewing their child's developmental records approximately every six weeks. Parents can view the learning targets that their keyworker has set for their child and

add their comments to this, which enables them to contribute their views and be involved in the planning for their child.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children's safety and welfare is promoted as they are cared for by staff who undergo effective induction and appraisal systems. Several staff have been working at the group for a number of years, demonstrating dedication to their work. All staff display an affinity for working with children and use their knowledge and experience very well to provide good quality care and education for all attending. Some members of staff are appropriately qualified, whilst others have obtained a level one qualification. This can mean that on some occasions, depending on staff shifts, qualification requirements are not consistently met between the Hall and the Rooms. However, staff attend a variety of short workshops and training courses, and action plans are in place for all staff to achieve a recognised level three qualification.

All mandatory records that contribute to the children's health and safety are in place. Records are well maintained and stored securely for confidentiality. The group provides concise written policies and procedures, which are readily available to parents. All staff and committee members are vetted, which ensures children's welfare is safeguarded. All staff attend regular meetings and liaise well with the committee to ensure the setting runs smoothly.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is good. Both supervisors have attended many training courses and are pro-active in ensuring that the practice of all staff contributes positively to children's achievements. However, the supervisor of the Rooms has not updated her qualification for some time. Both supervisors are good role models and motivate staff to ensure good standards are maintained. Various systems are in place to assess and monitor the quality of the educational provision and the impact this has on children's individual progress towards the early learning goals. Overall, the setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Three areas for improvement were identified at the last care inspection. These recommendations required the provision to ensure staff develop their knowledge and understanding of child protection issues, to record detailed information about children's special dietary requirements and share with staff, and lastly, to ensure staff in the 'Hall' are deployed effectively to enable them to offer help and support to children in all activities.

The management is committed to ensuring all staff regularly update their child protection training. All staff have since attended child protection training and show a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Staff in the Hall now ensure that all activities are prepared in advance where possible, which ensures they are ready for when children arrive at the start of each session. Staff position themselves well around the hall so that they can provide dedicated support at some of the more structured activities or observe children from a distance and offer help when needed. Both groups ensure that children's individual health and dietary requirements are known to staff through discussion with parents and written information obtained at registration. Details of children's allergies are displayed for staff and a prompt is also by the child's name on the register to remind staff of these when snack is being served.

Two points for consideration were identified at the last nursery education inspection. Firstly, recommending that staff ensure that planning clearly shows the next goals for individual children to help them move forward in their learning, and secondly, to ensure that the information provided and terminology used with parents is explained to them, understood and informative about their children's progress.

Staff identify individual learning targets for each child and these are used when staff meet to plan activities, to ensure children's learning needs are being met. There are still some inconsistencies in the planning as not all the daily plans show how activities can be extended for the more able child, or simplified for children who may require more support. Therefore, this has been carried forward as a recommendation for this inspection. Staff now ensure a DVD about the Foundation Stage curriculum is available for parents to watch during open days and written guidance is also displayed on the parent notice boards. This guidance, detailing each of the areas of learning and explaining what is involved, is also given to all parents. Staff now attach a key to abbreviations to the children's developmental profiles, to ensure all parents understand what is being written about their children.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 1 April 2004 there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards.

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.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- further develop children's current awareness about the importance of keeping safe by conducting regular fire drills
- ensure staff training and qualification requirements are met consistently between both the Hall and the Rooms.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- further improve the daily structured activity plans by consistently detailing how planned activities are extended or simplified to meet the learning needs of all children

- further develop the existing arrangements for parents to share what they know about their child when they first join the nursery, in order to provide a clearer picture of children's starting points in relation to the stepping stones.

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