

Harpenden Pre-School and Nursery

53 Luton Road, Harpenden, HERTFORDSHIRE, AL5 2UE

Inspection date	18/06/2013
Previous inspection date	30/03/2009

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	1
	Previous inspection:	1
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

- Children are extremely motivated and engage readily in new learning opportunities. Staff are highly skilled at using the children's ideas and interests as a link to maximising learning opportunities and as a result, children make excellent progress in their development.
- Staff provide children with a very strong base for their developing independence, exploration and future learning. A first class key person system helps the children form secure attachments with the staff, therefore, helping the children feel extremely safe, confident and self-assured.
- Children's learning and development is closely monitored through precise assessments and includes all those involved in their learning. Planning is sharply focused on children's individual needs. This leads to all children making rapid improvement in their progress from their starting points.
- The nursery uses highly successful strategies to engage parents in their children's learning in the setting and at home. Partnerships with other agencies are extremely effective and help support all children to learn and develop to the optimum level.
- The rigorous and highly motivating monitoring of staff and the day to day running of the nursery actively contributes to the setting of challenging targets to the already first rate practice continually taking place.

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 activities in all rooms and the outside area.
- The inspector looked at a selection of policies, procedures and photographs of children joining in with different activities.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation with the manager.
- The inspector spoke with the Manager, The Training and Development Regional Manager, staff, parents and children at appropriate times throughout the inspection.

Inspector

Susan Ennis

Full Report

Information about the setting

Harpenden Pre-school and Nursery was registered in 2005 and is on the Early Years Register. It is situated in converted premises in Harpenden, Hertfordshire and is owned and managed by Asquith Nurseries Limited. The nursery serves the local area and is accessible to all children. It operates from seven base rooms and there is an enclosed area available for outdoor play.

The nursery employs 37 members of child care staff. Of these, 25 hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 and two at level 2.

The nursery opens Monday to Friday, all year round. Sessions are from 7.30am until 6.30pm. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 150 children attending who are in the early years age group. The nursery provides funded early education for three- and four-year-old children. It supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language and children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- enhance further, the very good use of the outdoor play areas to give more spontaneous opportunities for children to investigate and explore the natural world.

Inspection judgements

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

Staff at the nursery have high expectations of themselves and for all the children, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language. They have a superb understanding of how young children learn and of the areas of learning. This enables them to provide a rich, varied and imaginative range of activities to captivate children's interest and ensure that they are exceptionally well prepared for their future learning and school. Staff know the children extremely well and they use this knowledge to expertly link resources and activities to the children's interests. For example, following children's visit to the zoo, staff plan a range of activities to extend and enhance their enthusiasm about animals. They look at books with the children and discuss the range of animals on the pictures. They talk about the differences in the animal's skin and fur and encourage the children to use their language skills to describe the patterns they can see. They further link children's real life experiences by providing a tiger and cheetah model for them to copy. Children maintain their focus on the activity and show high levels of energy

and fascination as they use their creative skills to finger paint stripes or spots on paper. Staff make excellent use of open-ended questions to extend children's thought processes. When the children start to use the paint to make their own creations, staff ask if they are drawing an animal from the zoo or one from their own imagination. Some children become so engrossed in the activity that their hands become covered in paint. They proudly hold up their hands saying 'look at my dirty hands' as they enjoy the sensory experience of feeling the paint on their fingers.

Staff are highly skilled at listening to the children and responding to their thoughts and ideas. When children use their literacy skills to make their own story book, staff use group time to ensure that each child, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, benefits from the activity. For example, they encourage the children to describe the job of an illustrator and author, enhancing their understanding of books and print. As they look through the book and realise that it is not quite finished, the staff ask the children to contribute their ideas of who might live in the house drawn on the page. Children enthusiastically suggest a witch, a giant and a wizard. They use their recall skills to relate this story to one they have read together which they excitedly describe as also being about a witch and her broomstick.

Observation and assessment at the nursery is precise. It sharply focuses on the children as individuals and uses a wealth of information from parents and carers to build a detailed initial assessment which effectively enables staff to plan for children's further progress. A flexible three week settling-in process enables staff to observe the children and rigorously assess their age and stage of development. Staff then immediately use this information to extend children's progress. For example, having noticed that very young children like using shakers, staff sensitively provide them with other toys that they can also shake. The children bang the felt cubes together and smile excitedly when they hear the bell ringing inside. This leads onto stacking the cubes one on top of the other as the staff sing a song describing what the children are doing. Therefore, staff are reinforcing children's understanding of the actions they are enjoying. Each child has their own individual 'Incredible Learning Journey' in which staff meticulously record observations and assessments of children's learning and progress. They then use this information to identify children's next steps and to plan how these will be achieved. For example, children roll a car down a large cardboard tube and show astonishment about the distance the car travels saying 'Wow look how far it went'. Staff then use this to enthuse children's understanding of distance and length. They help them to measure their friends in the class and to measure the vegetables growing in the nursery garden. Therefore, children's mathematical skills are further developed.

The staff team uses highly successful strategies that engage all parents in their children's learning at the nursery and at home. Parents are regularly asked to contribute their thoughts about their children's development by commenting on summative reports and attending parent's evenings. They are encouraged to record Home Learning Stories about events that the children participate in at home and 'Bunny Foo Foo', with his own bag, toothbrush and blanket, also likes going on adventures with the children. On their return to nursery, the staff can use the information recorded to talk to the children to enhance their recall and language skills and to share in the experiences the children have enjoyed. Stay and play sessions encourage the parents and carers to spend time in the nursery to

see how their children learn. Information sessions help the parents understand the importance of, for example, physical activities, such as, bike riding and cutting skills in developing their children's literacy and language skills. Reinacting the nursery rhyme about five current buns actively helps parents understand that props are a very useful tool for making an activity more engaging and fun. Parents and carers are invited to numerous open days throughout the year including Grandparents day and celebrations of May Day where they are encouraged to join the children in dancing around the May pole. The nursery's lending library helps parents stimulate children's interest in books as well as preparing the children for moving onto school as the books are carried home in a book bag just like at school.

Staff make dynamic use of the outdoor play areas and local environment to actively contribute to children's all round learning experiences. For example, very young children enjoy walks to the park and to feed the ducks. When they notice an aeroplane in the sky, staff use this to further their interest in different types of sounds. They also sing songs such as 'Row, row, row the boat' which children use as their cue to crawl into the doll's crib, which they rock to and fro imaginatively using it as a boat. Older children develop their sense of space and measure as they draw a chalk beanstalk on the ground and they lay end to end next to it, working out that it measures seven children. When children show an interest in making stepping stones, staff reuse an old cut down tree to provide planks and logs for them to use to balance on. There is, however, further scope to enhance the already very good use of the outside areas to give the children more spontaneous opportunities to investigate and explore the natural world.

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

The superior key person system, consistently used throughout the nursery, helps the children form secure emotional attachments to the staff. This ensures that the children feel extremely safe and settled and builds a strong base for their developing independence and exploration. Each child is assigned a second key person to ensure consistency in their well-being and learning. Flexible and thorough settling-in processes ensure that all relevant information is shared from the very start of the placement and that the children and parents feel totally confident and trusting from the beginning of their time at the nursery. The nursery has an open door policy and the manager makes herself very visibly accessible to the parents at all times. There is also a 'live chat' facility enabling the parents to talk to the manager whilst they are at work or at home. Staff at the nursery work exceptionally well with parents and carers to ensure that children's individual needs are met. For example, parents can order a cake for their child to enable them to celebrate their birthday at nursery. The cake is cooked on the premises and staff encourage the children to use their creative skills to decorate it to reflect their interpretation of their ideas. The cake is then enthusiastically shared with their friends.

Children show high levels of self-control during activities as they are exceptionally well supported in learning the expectations with regard to behaviour. The 'Golden Rules' are displayed in the classrooms and children confidently remind each other of them, for example, explaining that they have to wait their turn to join in with a potato printing activity. Younger children learn about feelings as they select a happy or sad face to display

on the feelings tree as they arrive at nursery. They are confident in expressing how they feel as they, for example, describe themselves as sad because 'We're tired.' Transitions within the nursery and onto other early years settings are exceptionally well supported. Younger children go for short visits to their new base rooms and staff complete a handover sheet as well as a tracker report and summative assessment of the child to ensure that all relevant information is shared with the new key person. Staff also attend specific training in the key person approach and the managing of transitions ensuring that they are confident that they giving the correct support to the children and their family. Older children go to visit their new schools and their teachers visit them at the nursery. Staff work with the parents to offer as much support as is possible helping the children prepare for the changes ahead. For example, when children are hesitant about the move to school due to them having a male teacher for the first time, staff arrange a set of Mini Kicker sessions run by trained male coaches. This helps to build the children's confidence as well as their physical and co-ordination skills.

Children's safety at the nursery is given the highest priority and their understanding of risk and protecting themselves is superbly encouraged. Following on from an interest in the emergency services, younger children go for a walk around the nursery to identify the safety signs and precautions in place. They later demonstrate their growing understanding as they remind their parent that only adults are allowed to open the safety gate at the top of the stairs. Older children actively take part in regular risk assessments and have devised their own 'Keeping safe' folder. Whenever an activity contains an amount of risk, the staff discuss this with the children, encouraging them to think of the hazards and the actions needed to minimise them. For example, they discuss how to prevent falling off your chair and know that using scissors carelessly can lead to you 'getting cut and bleeding'. Staff actively and enthusiastically support and encourage the children in learning about healthy lifestyles. Children's independence is actively encouraged at lunch time as they can nominate themselves as a helper, carrying the food to the tables and handing out the cutlery. They are highly motivated in learning about different foods as they grow a range of vegetables in the nursery garden. Some of the items grown are used to feed the nursery guinea pigs. This involves all of the children and encourages their kindness and thought for others. Parents are also outstandingly encouraged to take an interest in the meals and snacks their children enjoy. A monthly 'Snack attack' provides parents with an opportunity to take a sample of the children's snack to work with them for their coffee break. Not only does this enable them to sample the type of foods provided but it also acts as a conversation point with their children later in the day. Children have an exemplary range of activities to build and enhance their physical skills. For example, older children take part in the nursery Olympics. They watch a range of different sports on the white board and then, for example, set about making weights out of cardboard so that they can participate in a weight lifting competition , using a bowl of flour just like the professionals to prevent their hands from slipping.

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

The manager and staff team at the nursery work exceptionally well together and are uncompromising in their pursuit of excellence. There is a highly successful and sustained

maintenance of achievement and strong drive to continually improve. Monitoring of practice is robust and thorough at all levels and all staff are continually involved in the process. For example, they all have a copy of the self-evaluation form and are able to add their views and ideas to it. They also know that their views are listened to and respected by the inspirational manager of the nursery. Parents are given excellent opportunities to share their views about the nursery through use of questionnaires, comment slips and the open relationship they have with the staff and management team.

High quality supervision of staff is provided for all to ensure that a targeted programme of professional development continually improves their first rate skills and practice. Innovative induction procedures ensure that staff are trained and supported in their new roles until they feel confident and able to fully take on the responsibilities of the position awarded to them. For example, they must complete an on-line safeguarding course before starting at the nursery and their knowledge is tested through a range of questions and scenarios posed by the manager. All staff receive exceptional support in their roles through a range of staff meetings, training, supervisions and appraisals ensuring their continued confidence and understanding of the requirements in place.

The manager and staff have an excellent understanding of their responsibilities with regard to the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage. Children's safety is given the utmost priority and all staff demonstrate a detailed knowledge of the procedure to follow should any concerns arise. All staff attend safeguarding training and again, practise scenarios and tasks ensure that all relevant information is kept upper most in their minds. Robust and exemplary employment procedures ensure that staff are suitable to be in contact with the children and superb procedures ensure that they can report any concerns they have independently of the nursery and in confidence. Areas used by the children are continually and closely risk assessed and staff are extremely vigilant about children's on-going safety. All entrances to the nursery are fitted with security cameras and any visitors are met personally before being allowed onto the premises.

The nursery's practice consistently reflects the highest aspirations for the children and enables them to make excellent progress in their learning and development. Meticulous monitoring of the educational programme ensures that all planning and assessment procedures are effectively implemented. This means that all children receive sharply focused support to help them make rapid improvement from their starting points. Children's needs are exceptionally well met and highly effective partnerships with parents, external agencies and other providers ensures that targeted supported can be given to all children and their families.

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	EY312940
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	918840
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 5
Total number of places	93
Number of children on roll	150
Name of provider	Asquith Court Nurseries Limited
Date of previous inspection	30/03/2009
Telephone number	01582 712361

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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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