

Happy Tots Pre School

Landseer Road Methodist Church, Landseer Road, IPSWICH, Suffolk, IP3 9LX

Inspection date	05/06/2013
Previous inspection date	19/05/2009

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	3
	Previous inspection:	2
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		3
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		3
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		3

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision is satisfactory

- There is a strong commitment to develop and improve the pre-school, led by the competent and highly motivated manager. Self-evaluation is used to identify strengths and most areas for improvement, resulting in well-targeted action plans to address weaknesses effectively.
- Children benefit from a wide range of activities and resources to support and promote progress in their learning and development.
- Positive and trusting partnerships are established with parents. Open and regular communication, between parents and staff, supports parents' involvement in children's learning and provides a consistent approach to children's individual needs.

It is not yet good because

- There are insufficient opportunities for children whose home language is not English to develop and use their own language within the pre-school.
- Some staff are still gaining experience, knowledge and understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage. This results in variable quality of practice and some opportunities to extend children's learning are missed.
- The staff's assessment of children's learning is not consistent and occasionally does not offer a clear summary of older children's abilities in all areas of learning. This results in some learning experiences not being suitably planned to offer sufficient challenge for older children.

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 the main playroom and outdoor area and interacted with the children during the inspection.
- The inspector spoke with the staff at appropriate times throughout the inspection and discussed activities with them.
- The inspector had a discussion with the pre-school manager and undertook a joint observation with her.
- The inspector looked at children's learning journal development records, planning documentation, the pre-school's self-evaluation form and a selection of policies and children's records.
- The inspector checked evidence of suitability of the staff.
- The inspector also took account of the views of parents spoken to on the day and information included in the pre-school's own parent survey.

Inspector

Hazel Meadows

Full Report

Information about the setting

Happy Tots Pre School opened in 1981. It is registered on the Early Years Register and is managed by a voluntary committee. It operates from Landseer Road Methodist Church Hall in south-east Ipswich, Suffolk. The pre-school serves the local area and is accessible to all children. There is a fully enclosed area available for outdoor play. A purpose designed garden is under construction.

The pre-school employs seven members of childcare staff. The manager and deputy are trained to level 3 and are both working towards a level 5 qualification. Three other staff are trained to level 3 and two are working towards level 3.

The pre-school opens Monday to Friday, term time only. Sessions are from 9.15am until 12.15pm and 1.15pm until 4.15pm. An optional breakfast club operates from 8am until 9.15am and a lunch club is available from 12.15pm until 1.15pm. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 75 children attending who are in the early years age group. The pre-school provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. It supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

To meet the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage the provider must:

- provide opportunities for children to develop and use their home language in their play and learning at the pre-school, for example, by staff referring to dual language books and using some words in the child's home language at the pre-school, to support their language development at home.

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

- improve the staff's knowledge and understanding of how children learn and how to apply the Early Years Foundations Stage in practice, for example, by referring to documentation, such as Development matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage, to ensure that opportunities for children's learning and development are fully exploited
- review assessment to make sure it is consistent, precise and provides an accurate reflection of children's skills, abilities and progress. Ensure it used effectively to plan suitably challenging activities for all children.

Inspection judgements

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

When children start at the pre-school, their parents are invited to an induction session to discuss their child's abilities, interests, likes and dislikes. The child's allocated key person uses this information, plus their own observations, to establish each child's capabilities and starting points. This helps them get to know each child and enables them to offer activities and support tailored to children's individual needs and stages of development. Staff encourage children's development in the prime areas of learning, which are communication and language, physical development and personal social and emotional development. This support enables children to reach the expected developmental range for their age and reduces any shortfall in their development. It also helps children develop the foundation skills required for the next steps in their learning, across all the areas of learning, and prepares them for school.

Succinct observations are clearly recorded by key persons in a learning journal development record for each child. Observations are linked to the areas of learning and are supported by photographs and examples of the children's work. Termly summaries of children's progress are completed and possible lines of development sheets inform future planning. However, assessments across all the areas of learning are not consistently and regularly undertaken by key persons, for some older children. This results in activities and experiences, which do not always offer sufficient challenge or interest for older or more able children. Progress summaries for two-year-old children are clearly written and shared with parents, who have opportunity to add their own comments or evaluation. Children's learning journal development records are available for parents to view at any time and a notice is on display in the lobby to remind them of this. Parents' evenings are held, offering parents the opportunity to review their child's learning journey and discuss their child's progress with the key person in more depth. Parents' contributions, both verbal and written, regarding their children's experiences and progress at home, are welcomed and used by staff to support children's learning. A 'wow' board is available for parents, staff and key persons to note and value children's achievements.

Children's appreciation of books is fostered through an appealing range of books, which is presented in a cosy book area. There is also a book share scheme, which enables each child to borrow a book of their choice from the pre-school's collection and take it home. Small groups of children listen attentively as a member of staff reads stories to them. Children are encouraged to begin to recognise their names as they self-register and there are many labelled pictures at their level, helping them to realise that text has meaning.

Children are encouraged to explore the natural world and delight in finding an unusual bug in the grass. They examine it closely with a magnifying glass and the manager skilfully promotes their conversation and thinking through shared interest. Children have opportunities to explore their local community through outings to the local toddler group and library. Their appreciation of diversity is encouraged. For example, staff are beginning to use Makaton signing, to raise children's awareness of non-verbal means of communication. Also, a parent came into the group on her child's birthday to share

aspects of her culture through a variety of traditional Spanish foods and games. Children are sometimes welcomed in their home language, however, there is limited opportunity for children who have English as an additional language to use their home language in their play and learning, to support their language development at home.

Children relish playing outside in the large grassed area where they can move and run freely. A member of staff is skilled at encouraging a variety of movements to encourage children to exercise and promote their physical skills, flexibility and coordination. Children delight in playing with a colourful parachute and work cooperatively to raise and lower the canopy, enabling others to run or crawl underneath. Purposeful activities are planned to promote children's skills and development. For example, children concentrate and persevere as they ice biscuits, developing their manipulative skills and strengthening their pincer grip on the icing tubes. Children's imaginative role play is well supported with a good selection of props and resources. Children enthusiastically explore a range of media, such as, paint, playdough, sand and water.

Some staff are still developing their understanding of how children learn and opportunities are missed to extend their learning, thinking or conversation. For example, at snack time children are offered a variety of tastes and textures, such as, strawberries, tomatoes, pitta bread and cheese spread. However, staff do not use this opportunity to increase children's learning by talking to them about the types of food they are eating or to reinforce messages about healthy eating. When playing with the water, a child pours some onto the patio area. Opportunities to stamp and splash in the puddle, make footprints, look at children's reflections or note how the hot sun evaporates the water are not utilised. The children are told not to stand in the water in case they slip and opportunities to promote conversation and make discoveries are missed.

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

Staff work hard, on a daily basis, to transform a large hall into a bright and inviting play space for young children. Space is used well to meet children's needs and to offer a stimulating selection of engaging activities. The majority of children are keen to come into the pre-school and excitedly explore the broad range of resources available. However, some staff are initially occupied with non-urgent tasks, such as sharpening pencils and checking off lists, and are not available to greet the children. This results in children who are unsettled, not receiving the attention and reassurance they need. Also, staff are not available to channel children's excitement and enthusiasm into purposeful play and some children begin to play noisily and without purpose, flitting around the playroom until the doors to outside are opened.

Each child is allocated a key person to support them and liaise with their parents. Induction sessions offer an opportunity for the key person, parent and child to get to know one another and to ensure each child's transition from home into the pre-school is a smooth and positive experience. Parents complete an 'All about me' leaflet about their child and have discussions with their child's key person. This helps staff to understand and meet children's individual needs. Staff are caring and attentive towards the children and get to know them well as individuals. Consequently, children generally settle well and form

strong bonds with their key person or another member of staff. The key person system is flexible to accommodate any particular attachments a child may make. Children develop trusting relationships with staff and know them by name. They clearly feel safe and secure with staff, freely and confidently approaching them with their comments and requests. They are also confident to question and talk to visitors. This confidence and positive self-esteem supports them with future transitions into other settings and school.

Staff are positive role models of good behaviour and treat children with kindness and respect. They are skilled at supporting children to learn how to manage their own behaviour and emotions. This is helped by a calm approach and clear explanations and reminders from staff to enforce reasonable boundaries, for example, taking turns with toys. Children are learning how to keep themselves safe as they are encouraged to walk indoors.

A healthy lifestyle is promoted as children have daily opportunities for fresh air, daylight and exercise in the outdoor area. However, some learning opportunities are missed as some staff do not have sufficient experience or knowledge of how to promote children's learning through every day experiences. For example, healthy habits are usually promoted, however, children were not reminded by staff to wash their hands before eating snack at a spontaneous picnic outside, which could impact on their health. This was a missed opportunity by staff to promote children's understanding about the reasons for hand washing and to reinforce positive hygiene habits. Snacks, provided by the pre-school, are varied, healthy and nutritious, encouraging children to sample positive food choices. A daily picture menu for snacks is displayed in the entrance lobby and staff remain acutely mindful of any dietary needs. Parents provide children's packed lunches and the pre-school promotes and suggests healthy options, for example, by offering an information booklet to parents suggesting healthy food ideas for lunchboxes. Children manage their personal needs well, according to their age, and many independently access the toilets.

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

Over the past 18 months the majority of staff, including the manager, have been newly appointed. The manager is highly competent and has positive drive, clear vision for future development and a very good understanding of the requirements of the Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage. Many improvements and elements of good practice have already been introduced at the pre-school. The manager monitors individual staff performance through regular observations, supervision meetings and annual appraisals. Training needs are clearly identified and a clear programme of professional development is helping all staff to gain confidence and to improve their knowledge, understanding and practice with the children. Peer observations are used to review and enhance practice. However, at present, younger and less experienced staff do not have a secure enough knowledge and understanding of how children learn within the Early Years Foundation Stage and how to apply this within the pre-school. This impacts on some aspects of practice, such as missing opportunities to promote and extend children's learning and not always prioritising their deployment to meet children's needs.

The manager monitors the educational programmes and the planning and assessment, through observation and sampling and has identified most areas of weakness. She has identified a need to revise the planning and is organising training to improve staff's knowledge and understanding of how to use this effectively and to improve quality and consistency. Monthly staff meetings enable sharing of information and reflection on practice. An Ofsted self-evaluation form, completed by the manager in consultation with all staff, offers a predominantly accurate reflection of the pre-school's strengths and areas for improvement. Improvement plans are well-targeted. Ongoing reflection ensures any aspects requiring improvement are promptly identified and addressed. Parents' and children's views and opinions are valued and welcomed. These are actively sought by the pre-school, both verbally and through questionnaires and are used to help inform self-evaluation and areas for development at the pre-school. Children's opinions and requests are valued and used to guide future resources and activities.

All staff understand their responsibility to protect children from harm. Safeguarding policies and procedures are understood and effectively implemented to protect children. Robust recruitment procedures work effectively in practice to ensure suitability of staff. There is a thorough induction and probationary period and new staff are supported by a mentor. Risk assessments are rigorous and effective. Staff are mostly well deployed and are vigilant regarding safety and security, enabling children to play freely and safely. Arrival and departure times are closely monitored, to ensure children are kept safe and only leave with authorised carers.

Staff strive to develop positive and trusting partnerships with parents. They encourage close discussions with parents when their child starts at the pre-school. Ongoing communication is promoted and parents are encouraged to speak with their child's key person at any time. Staff proactively work with parents, seeking advice and support from other early years professionals if appropriate, to ensure children receive any additional support required at an early stage. Parents are kept well informed of general matters through regular newsletters, an attractive website and extremely well presented noticeboards at the pre-school. Parents spoken to on the day of the inspection are extremely happy with the play and learning experiences their children enjoy and the progress they are making. They comment positively about the warm care and attention their children receive. They find staff friendly and approachable and value the regular communication with staff, particularly their child's key person. The pre-school works hard to forge links with local schools and two-way visits are encouraged. A close and effective partnership is well established with the nearby children's centre to ensure a cohesive approach to support and meet children's individual needs.

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	EY316234
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	918452
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 5
Total number of places	36
Number of children on roll	75
Name of provider	Happy Tots Pre-School Playgroup Committee
Date of previous inspection	19/05/2009
Telephone number	01473 290290

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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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