



## The Centre Pre-school (Colc)

Inspection report for early years provision

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| <b>Unique Reference Number</b> | 650148  |
| <b>Inspection date</b>         | 10 January 2007                                       |
| <b>Inspector</b>               | Lynn Amelia Hartigan                                  |
| <b>Setting Address</b>         | The Centre, Straight Road, COLCHESTER, Essex, CO3 5EF |
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| <b>Registered person</b>       | Centre Pre School                                     |
| <b>Type of inspection</b>      | Integrated  |
| <b>Type of care</b>            | Sessional care, Crèche                                |

## 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*

For more information about early years inspections, please see the booklet *Are you ready for your inspection?* which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).

## 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?

The Centre pre-school opened in 1973. It operates from two rooms within a community building in Colchester. The pre-school serves the local community and surrounding areas.

There are currently 50 children from 2 to under 5 on roll. This includes 39 funded 3 and 4 year olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting currently supports children with special educational needs and children with English as an additional language.

The group opens five days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 09.15 until 11.45. Children are able to stay for a lunch club until 12.45 on a Monday, Tuesday and Thursday. Afternoon sessions start at 13.00 until 15.30 on a Wednesday and Friday.

There are eight staff who work with the children. Half the staff have recognised early years qualifications at NVQ level 2 and 3. The setting receives support from the local authority and the Pre-School Learning Alliance (PLA).

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

Children stay healthy as they are encouraged and praised when using the bathroom. Posters displayed within the bathroom remind the children about hand washing. Although the children have to be escorted to the toilet due to the layout of the building, most manage themselves within the bathroom independently. They are also encouraged to wash their hands before snacks and lunch club. Children are further protected from illness as the staff promote well documented policies regarding illness, medication and accidents. However, children's health could be compromised as medication entries are not always countersigned by parents. Most staff are fully trained in first aid. A satisfactory daily risk assessment and cleaning programme helps minimise accidents and cross-infection.

Children are now offered a choice of healthy snacks and drinks, for example, they enjoy several choices of fruit such as banana, grapes or apple. Milk and water is encouraged for drinks. Some children stay for lunch club and happily tuck into their lunches, staff sit with them and children are able to complete their meal in their own time. Staff encourage children to think about what food is good for their bodies, for example, during projects such as 'hospitals' and 'our bodies'.

Children move around indoors, between the two rooms carefully as they are set out well. Many opportunities to support the children's physical development are available such as; dressing up, puzzles, cutting and play dough activities. Children are able to independently dress themselves ready for a structured physical education session and even younger children use scissors with skill. Children have daily opportunities for outdoor play and fresh air as there is an outdoor play space available. They enjoy the ride on toys and most children pedal with ease and steer with accuracy using the space well. The use of crash helmets are encouraged and children are learning how to keep themselves safe.

Organised activities indoors such as; using the parachute and obstacle courses are enjoyed and encourages children to move in a range of ways as they jump on a trampoline, crawl through a tunnel and manoeuvre in and out of cones.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are secure, happy and settle very well as they are welcomed into bright, attractive rooms. Children's art work, photographs and posters create a welcoming environment. The rooms are divided into areas and the children appear happy and comfortable within their environment. They happily leave their parents and settle well to their chosen activity, even new children on their first day happily play without fuss. Children's safety is considered as a priority by staff who carry out risk assessments and regular fire drills with the children. Management

of the entrance doors by staff ensures children cannot leave the premises unseen. A visitors book is well maintained. Although the bathroom is clean it is in need of maintenance as small area of damp in a toilet cubicle has caused mould on the wall.

Children are able to choose from a good range of toys and play equipment that has been set out for them. All toys and resources are well maintained and of good quality. Some resources are easily accessible for self-selection, however, children's requests for toys or equipment is acknowledged and catered for.

Children's welfare is safeguarded as the staff have a satisfactory understanding of child protection. All required procedures and documents are in place to promote this. A policy and procedure to ensure a robust recruitment and vetting process is currently being reviewed and updated.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is good.

Children are busy, happy, play enthusiastically and are keen learners, as the sessions are varied and help them have fun and make progress in their development. They have formed warm relationships with the staff who interact well with the children. Activities are theme based and the children are currently learning about Winter and the weather. They proudly show you their collage snowmen.

Children are encouraged to initiate their own play. Well supported adult-led activities are also offered during the morning. Children feel comfortable and secure, they are able to select toys and access activities with ease and confidence. They happily leave their parents and concentrate well on a chosen activity.

Younger children receive good support as the staff are beginning to use the 'Birth to three matters' framework. Consideration is given regarding differentiation when planning activities to ensure all children's individual needs are met. Children have good opportunities for creative play in particular painting at the easel. This is very popular and used daily, younger children stand for some time experiencing the texture and colours of the paint. They choose to paint their hands instead of the paper and this is supported well by the staff.

### **Nursery Education.**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. All staff have a sound knowledge of the Foundation Stage and how children learn. Children ask lots of questions and concentrate well on tasks with support and guidance from the staff. An effective key worker system is in place and staff observe children well and record their progress within their individual development records. This is used effectively when planning the next stage of the children's learning, however, consideration could be given to include more outdoor activities.

Children are involved in a range of activities that supports all areas of learning. Children are able to recognise their names and most children are beginning to write their names on their work and others make good attempts. Lots of opportunities are available for children to mark

make as paper and pencils are accessible throughout the pre-school. The staff ensure that posters and labels around the hall encourages children to understand that text has a meaning. The provision of an attractive and cosy, well stocked book corner enables children to use books in a comfortable environment.

Good resources and activities such as; home corner, greengrocers, dressing up clothes are available. Construction kits such as large Duplo and Mobilo are available daily. These support and develop the children's creativity and imagination. Children's learning with regard to different cultures and the world around them is developing. Acknowledgement of different cultural festivals and traditional days are included within the plans and celebrated, this promotes the children's respect for others.

They enjoy topics such as 'Springtime', in particular learning about the life cycle of frogs, having tadpoles, caterpillars and butterflies to care for. They happily talk about Autumn and display their collection of leaves and rubbings. However, children have little opportunity to investigate, observe and explore for themselves activities outdoors which would stimulate their interest and curiosity and enhance their learning in all areas of learning.

Children are able to explore and problem solve as good imaginative toys such as a garage, train set, and dolls house are available. Children are competent when using the computer, supported by a member of the staff and have good eye and hand coordination and use the mouse well.

Children are progressing well in their mathematical development. They have some opportunities to problem solve, compare and weigh, for example, weighing ingredients during cooking activity. Staff provide a varied selection of resources and activities that support the children in this area. Children sing simple number songs during circle time, learning concepts such as taking one away and adding on.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is good.

Children are very well cared for as the pre-school staff are intuitive to their individual needs. Staff take time in getting to know them and their family backgrounds and as a result children settle very well. They positively encourage parents to share information so that they can best meet and support the children. Detailed and well written equal opportunities and special needs policies are in place and are regularly reviewed, these support and ensure the inclusion of all children. Children who require additional help are supported extremely well.

Children's knowledge and understanding of a wider world is encouraged mainly through conversation when working on planned topics, such as; Chinese New Year, Diwali and Christmas. There are some good resources available to the children that reflect diversity such as, a very good selection of ethnic dressing up clothes, books, small world figures, dolls, play food, musical instruments and posters.

Children feel valued and respected as all staff are calm and are good role models. Completion of easy tasks such as completing a floor puzzle are praised. Children are encouraged to show their work at circle time and show great pride in doing so, they are rewarded with stickers.

Children appear confident, reassured and considerate of their friends. They are kind towards each other, for example, they help their friends attending for the first time to understand the routine, they offer their hands and suggest they join the story group. A good behaviour management policy is in place for parents, communication with the parents ensures there is a consistent approach to managing behaviour and promotes their well being.

An emphasis is put in welcoming the parents into the setting. This promotes a good working relationship. Exchange of information ensures the staff are informed to develop and support the children's needs. This is achieved successfully as the pre-school have policies in place that supports their practice, these are also detailed within the prospectus for parents. The complaints procedure however, needs updating to ensure parents are fully informed of the process.

The partnership with parents and carers is good.

Children benefit from a strong emphasis on effective partnerships with parents. Parents are kept informed of events and dates by way of regular newsletters, notices displayed on the notice board. They are invited and welcomed into the pre-school by friendly, approachable staff. New parents are encouraged to stay and settle their children and are also encouraged to telephone at any time and talk directly to their child's key worker if they feel anxious.

Informal chats each day between parents and staff allow for the exchange of useful information to help children's progress and development. Development records are confidentially stored and available to parents at all times. Information regarding the stepping stones and Foundation Stage for parents is accessible and some links with home and the pre-school regarding supporting the children's learning is already established but could be developed further. Parents speak very positively regarding their children's care and learning at pre-school.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Children at the pre-school benefit from being cared for by motivated, dedicated and qualified staff. They feel secure and settled through the use of good staffing ratios and the environment is organised and welcoming so that children feel comfortable. Children's safety, enjoyment, health and achievements are supported by the policies and procedures within the operational plan. Most documents are in place to ensure the smooth running of the pre-school, these are maintained to a good standard and promote the children's welfare, care and learning. The pre-school staff and committee members work effectively together.

The leadership and management is good.

Children benefit from a team who work very well together. Through ongoing staff development and training the children are achieving well. The supervisor delegates some responsibilities and the staff feel valued and are a happy team who work very effectively.

Children benefit as the supervisor and her team are enthusiastic and forward thinking, they are able to identify the pre-schools strengths and weakness. The supervisor's hands on approach ensures she is fully aware and informed of what is happening throughout all the sessions. Good deployment of staff who understand their roles ensures the smooth running of the pre-school. Links with outside agencies and professionals such as the area special educational needs coordinator (SENCO) and links with the primary school ensure an inclusive environment is promoted.

Overall children's needs are met.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last inspection, the provider was asked to ensure children were engaged in purposeful play throughout the session. A very good range of activities are provided to ensure the children's overall development. Children are busy and have fun during their time at pre-school. The provider was asked to ensure that all staff have an awareness and understanding of behaviour management. Some staff have attended training, all are very good role models who have a consistent approach to behaviour management. The good staff and child ratios, children's understanding of the boundaries set and well run sessions contribute to very rare incidents of unwanted behaviour. The staff were also asked to ensure that parents countersign the accident book. This has now been actioned to ensure children's health is not compromised.

The provider was asked to provide more interesting opportunities for children to access books. a well resourced book corner is available. The children can easily access books as these are displayed attractively in a book case. Cosy cushions, bean bags and small tables and chairs encourages the children to use this area well. It was also requested that the provider use more everyday opportunities for children to use calculation. This has improved but could be developed further. For example, children sing favourite number action songs. Number puzzles and the use of toy money in the shop.

### **Complaints since the last inspection**

Since the last inspection there has been a complaint made to Ofsted that required the provider to take action to meet the National Standards. The complaint related to National Standards 11; Behaviour Management and National Standards 12; Partnership with Parents. Concerns were raised with regard to the recording of information regarding accidents and medication and providing parents with a policy and procedure regarding making a complaint. Ofsted were satisfied with the providers response to the actions and remains qualified for registration.

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):

- update the written statement for parents which provides details of the procedure to be followed if they have a complaint and ensure parents sign the medication book
- review the toilet facilities for the children to use to ensure they are clean and hygienic (this refers to the damp on the walls).

#### 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):

- develop and increase the children's purposeful use of the outdoor play area to enhance the children's experiences in the six areas of learning.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education (HMI ref no 2599)* which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)