

# Old Heath Community Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY245345
<b>Inspection date</b>	18 May 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Anita Bartram
<b>Setting Address</b>	Old Heath Road, Colchester, Essex, CO2 8DD
<b>Telephone number</b>	01206 794334
<b>E-mail</b>	
<b>Registered person</b>	Old Heath Community Pre School Ltd
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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*

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?

Old Heath Community Pre-school opened in 2003. It operates from a demountable building on the site of Old Heath Community Primary School, in Colchester, Essex. A maximum of 20 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open each weekday from 09.00 to 11.30 and 12.45 to 15.15 term time only. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 44 children aged from three to under five years on roll. Of these 40 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from both the local and wider area. The pre-school is able to support children with learning difficulties and disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs six staff. Five of the staff, including the manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications. One member of staff is working towards a qualification.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

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

The provision is good.

All children are developing positive attitudes to being healthy. Most need little prompting to wash their hands before coming to sit at the snack table and thoroughly enjoy eating fruit and bagels for snack. Many choose the healthier option of water or milk to drink. As a result, children are well nourished and are developing healthy tastes and habits. Staff follow sound cleaning procedures in the pre-school. They encourage children to follow good personal hygiene routines such as using tissues when appropriate, or washing their arms after handling Sally the giant snail. Consequently, children are well protected from cross-infection.

Staff follow appropriate medication procedures. Registration forms that parents complete when their child first starts in the pre-school are thorough and comprehensive. As a result, parents are able to pass on any relevant information about their child's health needs and provide consent for staff to act quickly in an emergency. Consequently, children have their health and dietary needs very well supported. Children are very well settled in the group. Staff follow generally sound settling in procedures and operate a clear and effective key worker system. This means children's emotional well-being is securely fostered.

Children's physical skills are developing very well. All children are very competent at moving around the setting and make full use of all the available space. For example, children confidently climb the small rope ladder leading up the climbing frame indoors and take 'safe risks' as they see how far they can jump or how they can balance. Children are able to move between indoors and out for a very valuable proportion of each session. This has an extremely positive impact on all other areas of the children's curriculum, particularly in their knowledge and understanding of the world. Children's finer physical skills are developing well. Again, they make full use of the valuable opportunities around them to use tools as they play. For example, they ably use small hammers to hammer in tiny pegs in cork boards, or funnels and jugs in the water. Children are developing very worthwhile personal skills, such as recognising for themselves when they need to use the toilet and many are willing to try for themselves to put on their coats to go outside. This prepares them well for moving up into school.

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

The provision is good.

The premises are safe and secure. Effective risk assessments are carried out by staff and as a result, all hazards to the children have been fully minimised. The main exit door is closely monitored by a member of staff as children arrive and leave and the main exit gates are kept secure once children are on the premises. As a result, children can play and learn in an environment free from hazards. Staff create a very welcoming atmosphere in the group as children arrive and make very full use of the available wall and ceiling space. For example, many examples of children's work are displayed on the walls and drapes and furniture are used to create specific areas for play or learning such as mark making, mathematics or role play areas. Consequently, children are able to see that their work is valued and appreciated.

All toys and equipment are in plentiful supply and in good order. Children are able to safely access a wide variety of toys, encouraging their independent thinking and organising skills. Staff make excellent use of the outdoor play area. As a result, many children are able to

experience the Foundation Stage curriculum in a wide and less restricting space best suited to their style or stage of learning.

Senior staff have a very clear appreciation of their roles and responsibilities regarding child protection. A concise statement on the notice board details basic procedures staff follow, and this is supported by a more in-depth safeguarding policy within the operational plan. The pre-school works effectively with the adjoining school to ensure any concerns are dealt with appropriately. As a consequence, measures to safeguard children from non-accidental harm are firmly in place.

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

The provision is good.

The atmosphere in the pre-school is vibrant and busy. Activities are prepared well before children arrive and areas of learning are clearly defined. As a result, children come into the group ready and prepared to play and learn. For example, after taking their coats off, some rush to select favourite resources such as small world animals, sorting through to find the elephants or lions, or they rush to get a peg off the climbing frame to be one of the first to get to the top. Staff plan fun activities linked to children's interests and this encourages many children into learning. For example, by having a week's topic about space or 'superheroes' this encourages many children, particularly boys, to draw or write more readily. As a result, all the children thoroughly enjoy their time in the pre-school and this actively promotes their good levels of achievement.

### **Nursery education**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The manager and her staff have a very good grasp of the Foundation Stage and how to deliver it effectively. The outdoor area is used fully by the staff to offer many areas of the curriculum for children. For example, boys do drawings of Spiderman outside, or they hunt for snails and bugs, leading to lots of discussions about natural habitats and mini-beasts. Children are able to use large building blocks outside to build on a very large scale. This excellent outdoor provision is very valuable in providing children with enriched experiences in their learning and firing their enthusiasm for learning.

Staff plan an effective curriculum for the children which is broad and covers all six areas of learning. Staff interact well with the children whilst they are playing and generally use discussion and questions to extend children's thinking or understanding. However, challenge or extension in older or more able children's learning is not always sufficiently planned for whilst they play or take part in adult-led activities such as story time. Staff make very full use of the whole premises, both inside and out. Areas of learning indoors are purposefully laid out and children generally make good use of all the resources available to them. Many resources are stored at low level which children are able to readily choose to play with or help to tidy away. As a result, children are constantly busy and engaged in activities they enjoy. This helps to foster a good sense of independent learning in the children.

Staff use of assessment is satisfactory. Staff make regular observations of the children whilst they play to identify individual children's achievements. As a result, staff identify gaps in children's learning or special interests they may have. Staff use this information to plan fun topics to accommodate children's interests and this helps to motivate children in their learning. Staff do not yet assess children as they start in the pre-school. As a result, staff are not able

to identify children's developmental starting points to ensure children are reaching their potential by the time they move on to school.

Children's personal, social and emotional development is very good. They are building very positive relationships with each other and the staff. They enjoy being independent, in both their learning and their self-care. For example, they purposefully select resources they enjoy, move between inside and out confidently and enjoy being given special jobs to help out such as tidying away. Many children help each other when needed. For example, they help each other put their coats on. Children understand rules and older or more able children regulate their own behaviour. As a result, the atmosphere in the group is calm yet purposeful, thus creating a positive atmosphere for children to learn and play in. Children's creative development is progressing very well. Many children enjoy role play, especially that linked to the exciting topic of 'superheroes' They organise each other in their games and act out familiar sequences, using appropriate language and tone of voice. Children enjoy expressing themselves through dance and movement. For example, they hear music playing on the computer and immediately start to move their bodies in rhythm. They vigorously shake musical instruments to music and are beginning to be able to stop and start with some control.

Children's communication, language and literacy skills are good. As children register their names when they arrive, many are beginning to recognise familiar letters and the sounds that go with them. Children generally make good use of the mark making area. Many children enjoy books and some older children are beginning to appreciate the properties in books such as indexes and how these can be used. Children talk about stories they enjoy at home or what their favourite stories are. The whole group story time sometimes restricts children's developing listening skills. For example, younger children find it difficult to concentrate within the large group and become bored and restless. This in turn distracts older or more able children and prevents staff from making full use of the story to extend older children's thinking and understanding. Overall, children have very good communication skills and use language for a wide variety of purposes.

Children's knowledge and understanding of their world is good. Children are becoming very knowledgeable about their natural world as they search for bugs and snails in the garden. They delight in closely observing the Giant African snail and are brave enough to momentarily hold it to their arm. They ask meaningful questions and confidently describe what they see. Children's mathematical development is good. Children have ample opportunities to explore mathematics whilst they play. For example, in water play they tip and pour through funnels into containers and jugs, learning through play about volume and capacity, displacement and sinking and floating. Children are beginning to use their fingers to represent number and use mathematical language to describe size. Not all staff are confident to extend older or more able children's mathematical skills, for example, introducing 3D shape names or encouraging them to record number during everyday opportunities such as registration time.

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

The provision is good.

Staff have very valuable working relationships with parents. For example, staff encourage parents to write in children's 'brilliant books' about the positive things children have done at home. Staff add their comments in the books too and this fosters very valuable two-way communication between home and pre-school. This enables staff and parents to work consistently together to more effectively meet children's individual needs. Staff work closely with parents to discuss any concerns they have and, as a result, any children with more specific needs are fully supported in the group. There is a good variation in resources and images

available to children to reflect diversity whilst they play. For example, story books in the book corner contain different language texts or depict images of race, culture, gender or disability. This helps children to build a balanced view of their wider world around them.

Staff manage children's behaviour very positively. They use valuable strategies to distract younger children or reason with older ones. Staff have introduced systems in to the children's play to enable children to learn to follow rules themselves. For example, before using the climbing frame children automatically take a peg from the sign to enable them to play. This has the effect of limiting the number of children on the climbing frame for their safety and teaches children to take responsibility for their actions and develops their verbal negotiating skills. For example, if all the pegs are being used, they politely ask if they can have their friend's peg when they have finished with it. Some less experienced staff show less confidence in managing some children's more challenging behaviour. This reduces the consistency children receive in learning what are acceptable ways to behave.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. The group provides good information to parents about the Foundation Stage when their child first starts. This gives parents a good general outline of the areas of learning for their child. The 'brilliant books' are a useful tool for parents to note any concerns or achievements their child has completed at home and parents are able to ask to see their individual child's developmental records at any time. As a result, the partnership between staff and parents has a valuable effect on children's experiences within the Foundation Stage.

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

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

The organisation of the pre-school is very good and this has an extremely positive impact on the environment in which children can play and learn. All staff have a core childcare qualification or are actively studying towards one. All staff continue to keep their skills and knowledge up to date through short courses or in-house training. This creates a vibrant, bustling atmosphere for the children to progress.

Safe recruitment procedures are followed by the managing committee which ensures all adults having unsupervised contact with children are safe to do so. All required policies and procedures are implemented effectively by staff to fully promote children's health, safety, enjoyment, achievement and ability to make a positive contribution.

The leadership and management of the pre-school is good. The strategic and administrative support the managing company provides is effective in enabling the manager and staff to focus solely on their direct work with the children. Assessment of children when they arrive in the pre-school has not yet been fully developed. This hampers staff in rigorously monitoring how effective the quality of their teaching is on children's progress. Staff have a very strong working relationship with the adjacent school. Consequently, children experience a very smooth transition from pre-school into school thus minimising any disruption to their educational progress. The combination of strong strategic guidance and good management very effectively contributes to children's good progress towards the early learning goals

Overall, children's needs are met.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

### Care

At the last inspection, the provider agreed to request written permission from parents for seeking emergency medical advice or treatment. This request has been added to the registration form which parents complete as their child starts at the pre-school. This enables staff to take more proactive action should they have more immediate concerns about a child's health.

### Nursery Education

At the last inspection, the provider agreed to consider further developing the assessment records to ensure they are linked to the stepping stones, are consistent and updated on a regular basis. Some good improvement has been made. Developmental records now refer securely to the stepping stones within the Foundation Stage and are consistently completed by staff. They are generally kept up to date. As a result, staff now plan a valuable curriculum which is linked to the interests and gaps in children's learning.

## **Complaints since the last inspection**

Since the last inspection 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):

- develop all staff skills in managing children's more challenging behaviour

### **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 the use of assessment; to enable staff to monitor the effectiveness of their teaching on children's achievement by the time they leave the pre-school; and to inform parents of their child's level of achievement in the Foundation Stage when they move on to school

- identify opportunities to extend and challenge older or more able children during both adult and child-led activities.

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)