

Tollesbury Preschool

Inspection report for early years provision

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| Unique Reference Number | 402290 |
| Inspection date | 13 July 2007 |
| Inspector | Lynn Amelia Hartigan |
| Setting Address | The Manse, 2 Station Road, Tollesbury, Maldon, Essex, CM9 8RA |
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| Registered person | Amanda Czuba |
| 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

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.

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?

Tollesbury Pre-school opened in 1967. It operates from a converted rectory in the village of Tollesbury. The pre-school serves the local community.

A maximum of 19 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open each weekday from 09.00 to 11.30 and 13.00 to 15.30, term time. Children have access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are six staff who work with the children. All of 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's health is effectively promoted as the pre-school takes positive steps to maintain a healthy environment. Children are encouraged to take responsibility for meeting their own health needs. They stay healthy and are learning about their own personal hygiene as they are encouraged to independently use the bathroom, even younger children do this very well. Steps, liquid soap and paper towels are offered to assist hand washing, and some posters are displayed to prompt children to wash their hands.

Children's accidents are minimised as staff carry out some basic risk assessments and most of the staff team hold current first aid certificates. Children are protected and appropriately cared for if they have an accident as a first aid box is well maintained and well documented accident and medication books are kept. Information is recorded regarding children's medical needs with clear instructions from the parents ensuring they are cared for appropriately. Children understand the need to use tissues for runny noses, as staff reinforce this. They help themselves or ask for assistance. Children are thanked when covering their mouths when they cough or sneeze, and are able to tell you about germs and how they spread. Children learn about themselves and how to keep healthy through the staff planning of topics such as healthy eating and our bodies. They talk about good foods to eat and proudly show you their vegetable pictures and cabbage paintings.

Children's health is safeguarded as effective strategies to promote this are in place, such as sick and illness policies. These are available to parents. Children have their dietary needs met and are beginning to understand about healthy living because they have many opportunities to learn about healthy eating through their project work. The pre-school now offers healthy snacks. Children are provided with regular drinks as water is readily available, although this could be more easily accessible to enable them to pour their own water when required. Parents are encouraged to contribute toward snacks and children bring in many varieties of fruit to share. Daily snack helpers are chosen and children enjoy helping to count out the cups and offer the snacks to their friends. Parents are informed verbally and by a weekly snack menu as to what snacks are offered, for example, a selection of fruits, oatcakes with cream cheese or brown bread toast. Snacks provided have taken into account the children's dietary and religious requirements, as the staff have good communication with parents and these details are recorded within their personal records.

Children move around indoors very carefully. They play in one large room and are able to move around and visit the bathroom, negotiating space well. They free flow from indoors and outdoors, and vigilant staff ensure that children's safety is maintained. Children's physical health is supported with regard to large motor development as many opportunities are provided for children to develop their large physical skills. For example, slides, large climbing frames and scooters are regularly available. Children enjoy fresh air and exercise daily and have fun playing in the garden throughout the year, regardless of the weather. Children are familiar with wearing sun hats when it is hot and are beginning to understand the importance of sun cream, as the staff educate them about protecting themselves from hot weather and the effect it has on their body.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a warm, welcoming environment that is safe and well maintained, as the staff ensure the premises are welcoming to both children and their parents. Several notice boards within the hallway display useful information for parents, and the main play room is very bright and child friendly. Children are able to free flow in and out of the room into the outdoor play area for most of the session. There are cosy and defined areas such as a book corner and imaginative play areas. Children's own art work is beautifully displayed around the room creating a sense of belonging.

Children are kept safe as the staff ensure all visitors have identification and use a visitors book. A secure front door is locked once parents have left and is monitored by vigilant staff on departures to ensure the premises remain secure. Children use a balanced range of safe and suitable equipment. Many resources are stored at a low level, promoting children's independence and enabling them to reach toys and sit comfortably to join in. Resources are of a good quality and there is a broad range available to the children to assist their play and learning.

Children are cared for in a safe environment where staff take steps to minimise risks. They are committed in providing safe and secure play space for children, this is achieved by good management of children. All staff are aware of their roles and where they should be deployed. Children are beginning to understand the importance of staying safe, as they are involved in practising regular fire drills which are recorded. Fire notices are displayed around the building, and students and visitors are reminded of what to do in the event of a fire.

Children are safeguarded from harm as their well-being is cared for by staff who understand their responsibilities towards child protection. A well written policy is in place that underpins their practice, this includes a procedure for a lost or uncollected child.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are having fun and learning as they enjoy a range of stimulating activities. Children are busy and play very well as the sessions are varied and support them in their development, and as a result, their behaviour is good. They have formed warm relationships with the staff who interact well with the children. All children appear confident and have fun at the pre-school. They ask lots of questions and respond to new challenges by questioning and using their own initiative. Children's individual needs are met, although the more able children need more challenge. However they are developing a good range of knowledge and skills because the setting plan and provide activities and play experiences that help children achieve in all these areas.

Children are able to make choices from the range of resources available to them in easily accessible storage units. For example, children self-select mobile phones to assist their imaginary game in the home corner. Staff help children choose puzzles of their choice from the cupboard. Well organised and attractively displayed activities are prepared, ready for the children's arrival, and as a result children happily settle very quickly to their chosen activity. Focused activities are planned daily. Children can free flow play indoors and out, and staff movement is dictated by the children's choice of where to play.

The play room is inviting and fun as staff ensure it is decorated with the children's art work, mobiles, posters and a visual timetable which the children manage well. Cosy, defined areas are well used and the children enjoy stories in the book corner. Children start the day with a short registration where they discuss the weather. They learn about fruits and how they grow and are shown grapes on the vine and unripe plums on a branch. They compare what they are like after they are ripe. They are also shown plums and grapes ready to eat for their snacks and can see the differences. They predict what the fruit may taste like if eaten before it is ripe.

Most staff have attended training in relation to the under three's and as a result are able to support young children very well. Planning takes into account the under three's and is being implemented successfully.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Planning for funded children is good and staff are able to discuss the children's stage of development. Short term plans have basic evaluation and loosely link to assessments. Children's achievements are monitored through adult focused activities and written observations relating to areas of learning. These are plotted on their stepping stones stepped documents, although are not always used to inform the planning for the next stage of learning. All aspects of each area of learning are planned for and are covered regularly. Key workers monitor any gaps, but more able children are not always provided with enough challenge.

Children are competent and independently use the computer, staff are on hand to assist if required. Children patiently wait for their turn and also help each other. They enjoy interactive story time using props. They understand about and respect books. They are keen to take part in a favourite story and staff are skilful in asking questions and prompt the children to think and predict the ending. Children volunteer to sing at group time, others are encouraged to sit quietly and listen. These sessions assist in developing listening and communication skills.

Children's creativity is encouraged and supported well, as staff offer a wide range of experiences such as messy play activities, dance and music, and dressing up. Children particularly enjoy music and movement and joining in the 'Cha Cha Slide' dance. They learn about rhythm but also use language such as forward, back, left and right.

Children's mathematical development is progressing well. Number lines displayed around the room assist children in their number work. Some children are able to count competently to ten and some beyond. They recognise numerals and are beginning to compare. Some children can do simple addition and subtraction. They learn about weight and measure through using the scales in cooking activities, weighing fruits in the shop. Volume is discussed in basic terms through the water play activities, they measure how many cups it takes to fill a bottle. Children wanting to measure themselves are encouraged to think about who may be the tallest or shortest before they measure themselves on a wall chart.

Children make very good use of the outdoor play area and are developing good physical skills. They enjoy shooting basketballs with some accuracy into the net and have fun throwing coits and bean bags skilfully into bins. They handle tools such as scissors and malleable materials effectively, safely and with control. They are offered a wide range of materials for creative play, such as cutting out, sticking, cornflour and dough. Children show you their plants, leeks and tomatoes they have grown, and explain that they need water and sunshine to grow.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Staff are effective in helping children make a positive contribution and children are developing good relationships with adults and other children in the setting. Staff work closely with parents and carers to meet children's individual needs and ensure they are fully included in the life of the pre-school. Children develop a sense of belonging, they work well with others and make choices and decisions. This contributes to children developing high self-esteem and respect for others.

Children are able to access some good resources that are in place, such as small world figures, a globe, all kinds of reference books and dolls in traditional dress. These reflect a diverse community and help children learn and understand about individuality. Children learn about some traditional days, such as mothers day, and festivals such as Chinese New Year and Christmas, as these are included within the curriculum planning. Children are made to feel special. They are given a card on their birthday and their friends sing happy birthday to them. Children enjoy making a village sign using many different materials and textures, and take pride in displaying it for all to see within the village. It is beautifully made and gives the children a real sense of community.

Children's needs are supported as the staff follow their written policy regarding special needs. Two members of staff have completed Special Educational Needs (SENCO) training and have experience working with children who require additional support. Staff ensure that all activities are adapted to enable all children to participate. Children understand responsible behaviour and learn about boundaries as staff are able to manage a wide range of children's behaviour. Staff deal with behaviour consistently that is proportionate to the child's level of understanding and maturity. The staff create an environment that encourages children to behave well. Children develop self-esteem and respect for others by learning social skills, for example, helping each other at snack time, listening to their friends news or singing songs at group time. Staff encourage children to participate and discuss what they have been doing during the morning during circle time. Their friends sit patiently and listen.

Children's needs are being met well as the pre-school work closely with parents and carers to enable all children to achieve. Parents are given clear information in a variety of formats, which includes newsletters, information sheets, an information board and verbally. Children receive good care and are supported as the staff ensure the parents are informed regarding their day at pre-school. All staff are friendly and approachable, and discussions with parents suggest they are very pleased with all aspects of the pre-school. Children settle well as an effective settling in process is in place. A comprehensive complaints policy is also available.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents are provided with some good information about all aspects of their children's learning, as information regarding the stepping stones and Foundation Stage are displayed within the pre-school. Home activity sheets are provided weekly, which include the main topics and ideas, and suggestions of how parents can support their children at home. Parents are aware that development records are kept on their children and are encouraged by the staff to contribute to them. Staff discuss the children on an informal basis daily. Annual open evenings and induction days for new parents and children are organised and reasonably well attended. Here, staff are able to offer sensitive suggestions to parents on how to facilitate learning at home, for example, encouraging early mark making, reading books together, counting and positive behaviour strategies. Children benefit from the

effective partnership the parents have with the staff. Children bring in art work from home that they have completed with their parents, this is displayed within the pre-school.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered as children are settled, content and comfortable with each other. Children learn about other countries and people's beliefs through festivals and many positive images provided in resources and displays that challenge the children's thinking. Children clearly know the difference from what is right and wrong, and their behaviour is very good as the staff are good role models and clearly value all children and their individuality. This is a strength of this group.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The children benefit from a manager and a staff team who offer stability and consistency. Most have worked at the setting for many years. However, they are not complacent and are committed in providing quality care and endeavour to keep up to date with current practice through training. The manager supports her staff in their own development. The children are cared for by qualified and dedicated staff. Although not in writing some basic procedures are in place with regard to recruitment, vetting, induction and appraisals for staff. However, to ensure continued suitability of staff and the children's well-being, these should be more robust.

Attention is given to the deployment of staff at all sessions and it is evident that staff are fully aware of what is expected from them. They clearly support each other which contributes to the smooth running of the sessions. All staff demonstrate a good standard of professionalism at all times, are friendly and approachable. All appropriate documents, as required, are all in place. The operational plan has now been sectioned into outcomes for children and is currently under review.

Leadership and management is good. The manager is hands on and is very much part of the team, with no distinction as all staff are very experienced and competent. Review of the service provided is continuous and the manager and staff team welcome new ideas and suggestions if it will have a positive impact on the children. The pre-school acknowledge their own strengths and weaknesses and have identified areas for improvement.

The manager is committed to ensure staff can attend training and provides a training programme. All staff attend regular staff meetings and are collectively involved and consulted with regard to any changes. As a result they feel valued as a team member and supported within their own development.

Overall children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the provider was asked to update the child protection procedure to ensure it was in line with current guidance. The policy and procedure have been updated and now refer to current guidance to ensure children's well-being is safeguarded.

In addition the provider was asked to develop a robust system to evaluate and monitor the quality of nursery education, and in particular some aspects of knowledge and understanding of the world. The setting have introduced an evaluation system where activities are evaluated and records are made. However this needs to be developed further and a recommendation has been made following this inspection in relation to this. The pre-school have introduced a wider

variety of experiences and resources for children and therefore their knowledge of the world is developing well.

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 complaint 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 robust policies and procedures with regard to recruitment, vetting, induction and staff appraisals.

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):

- continue to develop observations and evaluation to ensure they inform the next stage of learning. Ensure planning provides the more able child with sufficient challenge in all 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