

# Harwich Centre Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY272636
<b>Inspection date</b>	27 November 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Justine Leong
<b>Setting Address</b>	Adult Community College, Main Road, Harwich, Essex, CO12 4AH
<b>Telephone number</b>	01255 556208
<b>E-mail</b>	
<b>Registered person</b>	Tendring Adult Community College
<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?

Harwich Centre Pre-school opened in 1980 and operates from two rooms within the Tendring Adult Community College in Dovercourt. A maximum of 37 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The group is open each weekday from 09.15 to 11.45 and the pre-school is also open from 13.00 to 15.30. All children share access to a secure enclosed outside area.

There are currently 94 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 55 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from a wide catchment area. The nursery currently supports a number of children with special educational needs, and children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 15 members of staff. Of these, 14 hold appropriate early years qualifications.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

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

The provision is good.

Practitioners follow stringent health and hygiene procedures to ensure children remain healthy at the setting. Children have access to suitable hand washing facilities and use them independently before eating or after using the toilet, helping to minimise cross-infection. Visual aids are in place to remind children to wash their hands thoroughly and staff frequently remind them that this will stop germs from spreading.

Children are well protected from illness as there is a clear sickness policy in place and this is shared with parents. Almost all staff have undertaken paediatric first aid training and there is a first aid box available in each room, helping to ensure children are well cared for in the event of a medical emergency. Any accidents occurring at the setting are accurately documented in the accident record, which is signed by parents.

Children acquire habits that promote a healthy lifestyle as they share nutritious foods at snack time, based on the healthy eating policy. Children sit together to enjoy fresh fruit and a drink of milk or juice. However, children do not have constant access to fresh drinking water throughout the session, in order to ensure they do not become dehydrated. All staff are aware of individual needs with reference to food and drink and clear information sheets on children's allergies are kept in each room.

Children have regular opportunities to enjoy fresh air and physical activity as they access the secure outside area. They play with balls, ribbons and bubbles, helping to develop a broad range of physical skills such as imaginative movement and balance. Older children benefit from visits to the adjoining primary school where they have the opportunity to participate in physical education lessons in the spacious hall. They move around confidently, safely and imaginatively, showing a good awareness of space.

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

The provision is good.

Children play and learn in a warm and comfortable environment that provides all necessary facilities to support their overall development. The accommodation is spacious and child-friendly and staff complete regular risk assessments to identify potential hazards and minimise risk. Appropriate safety equipment is in place, including socket covers on low-level plug sockets and safety gates at each door. All visitors to the setting are thoroughly vetted, have their identification checked and are also requested to sign arrival and departure times in the visitors book. A coded door entry system is in place on the door to each play room, helping to ensure children remain safe. There is a comprehensive fire evacuation policy and fire alarms and fire blankets are positioned throughout the building. The evacuation procedure is regularly practised with children, ensuring everyone would know what to do in the event of an emergency.

Children play with safe and suitable toys and resources that conform to safety standards. Some toys are stored to allow children to access them safely and independently. Children frequently help with the cleaning of resources and all toys are regularly checked for signs of damage. Children are learning to keep themselves safe as staff remind them of simple safety routines. For example, children sweep up sand that has spilt from the sand tray to ensure it does not

present a slipping hazard. Children also benefit from visits to the setting by police officers and fire officers who teach them how to stay safe on the road and at home.

Staff have a good understanding of their role in child protection and are able to put appropriate procedures into place when required, according to the 'Local Safeguarding Children Board'. Several members of staff have undertaken first aid training and all staff are aware of who to contact if they have concerns about a child in their care, helping to ensure children's welfare is promoted.

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

The provision is good.

Children leave their parents and carers confidently on arrival at the nursery, due to the welcoming atmosphere and supportive staff. Children aged under three years are well supported as staff are developing a thorough understanding of young children's needs. They have a clear understanding of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and use it effectively to plan interesting activities. Progression is recorded following the framework and staff adapt activities through questioning and levels of support offered, to ensure all children can access them equally. Children are sensitively supported by staff to help them develop independence and self-esteem. For example, children are shown how to hold scissors to help them achieve success in cutting out.

Children play with a range of toys and activities that contribute to the development of language, mathematical thinking, imagination and social relationships. For instance, some children play in the home corner and talk to each other about what they are cooking, while other children work with staff at the craft table, using their imagination to create colourful picture with pastel crayons. Staff encourage children to make connections to their own experiences; they play with small world zoo animals and compare them to animals they have seen in the zoo.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff demonstrate a secure understanding of the Foundation Stage and how children learn. They provide many opportunities for stimulating play based experiences that are often planned with children's interests as a starting point, consequently children are motivated and interested to learn. Children receive a balance of adult-led and child initiated activities, enabling them to make decisions about their day and learn at their own pace.

Children learn effectively in a calm and productive environment. Staff ensure that they have interesting resources to facilitate their learning and the high adult to child ratio often enables staff to work with individual children to support them in their chosen task. Effective use of time and resources including accommodation ensures children have access to a broad range of toys and activities, many of which they are able to access independently.

Planning covers all areas of learning equally and an effective key worker system is in place. Staff frequently observe children to assess levels of ability and ensure they make progress through the stepping stones. However, assessment is not used to inform planning and ensure children are sufficiently challenged, potentially hindering children's development. Staff offer good levels of support, effectively questioning children to ensure they understand and are able to access all activities.

Children use speech effectively to organise and explore real and imaginary situations. They play together in the home corner, deciding what they should cook for dinner and enter into lively discussions with staff about their favourite foods. Staff provide a wide variety of toys and activities to encourage children's language development and listen attentively to their responses, helping them understand their ideas are valued. Children have access to a range of fiction and non-fiction books in the comfortable book corner and enjoy sharing stories with staff. Children are developing an understanding that writing is used to record and communicate ideas as staff provide mark-making opportunities involving resources such as crayons, pencils and paints.

Familiar daily routines are regularly used to encourage children to count and use numbers in context. At snack time children count how many people are present and staff also use physical activity sessions in the large hall as a valuable opportunity for children to play games involving number. Children are developing an understanding of shape and measure and enjoy activities such as cooking, during which they weigh ingredients with support. Staff encourage children to use mathematical language, for instance, when playing with construction toys children sort objects by size and use appropriate language to describe what they are doing.

Children have valuable opportunities to investigate objects and materials and ask questions about how things work and why things happen. They learn about the world around them as staff provide activities and resources encouraging them to think and make connections. For instance, children have grown potatoes, tomatoes and sunflowers, developing an understanding of growth and change. Children also enjoy participating in messy activities such as exploring jelly or cooked pasta. Children frequently play games on the computer and access other information technology resources including programmable toys and calculators, helping to support their learning.

Children have daily opportunities to use their imagination in craft as staff provide resources for a range of cutting, sticking, painting and drawing activities. Imaginative play is actively encouraged and staff provide stimulating role play areas based on situations and experiences that are familiar to the children. They make links to their own experiences as they play together in the home corner, using their imagination to act out stories. Children join in willingly during singing sessions as they sing simple songs from memory and staff use hand puppets to encourage children to participate.

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

The provision is good.

Children are happy and well-settled, they enter the nursery willingly and leave their parent or carers confidently. Clear written information about each child's needs are shared with staff through their personal details forms and through their child profile. Staff use the information shared to inform their practice and ensure that they provide children with an individual approach. Children develop a good sense of belonging as, for instance, staff display their work throughout the setting and clearly demonstrate that it is valued.

Children are increasingly able to manage their own behaviour and play together well. Staff provide a range of activities that encourage cooperative play including parachute games and games that require turn-taking. Staff are consistently polite and respectful towards each other and act as positive role models, helping children develop respect for others. Consequently, the atmosphere in the nursery is calm and productive and children's behaviour is good. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children are cared for in an environment that positively celebrates children's differences and similarities. They have meaningful opportunities to learn about the wider world and different cultures and beliefs as they celebrate a range of festivals including Divali, Yom Kippur and Chinese New Year. Many toys and resources at the setting are representative of diversity such as books, small world toys and posters. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported as there are several special educational needs coordinators, all of whom have undertaken appropriate training. Staff work in partnership with parents and external agencies to ensure individual needs are met and to promote inclusion.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Staff and parents have developed good working relationships and share important information through daily discussions. Parents receive good quality information about the educational programme at the setting through the initial prospectus and through long term and weekly plans being clearly displayed in the entrance hall. Assessment evenings are held every term to discuss children's progress and achievements with parents and carers. The nursery operates an 'open door' policy to encourage parents to visit and share their ideas. There is an effective complaints procedure in place.

### **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

The manager has implemented a robust procedure for recruitment and induction, including thorough checking of references and new staff undertaking a probationary period of three months. This ensures that children are well cared for and educated by suitable adults with substantial knowledge and experience of child development. The nursery has a very good ratio of trained staff and a strong commitment to their ongoing professional development.

Staff make good use of available play space both indoors and out. As a result, children are able to move freely and independently around the play areas accessing a range of activities which support their play and learning. Clear and comprehensive policies and procedures are in place to support good practice and these are shared with parents to ensure they remain fully informed of childcare practices at the setting. Written parental permissions are in place for all children although not all have been signed by parents.

Leadership and management is good. The manager and staff work well together to form a strong team, dedicated to providing good quality care and education. Yearly staff appraisals are completed to identify strengths and areas for improvement and to ensure individual training needs are addressed. The provision and curriculum delivery is monitored through regular staff meetings, during which staff are encouraged to share their ideas and evaluate their own practice. The provider is fully committed to promoting an inclusive environment in which every child is happy and making good progress. Overall, children's needs are met.

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

At the last inspection it was recommended that actual hours of attendance for staff and children are recorded and that children have an area to rest in the pre-school room. Both these areas have now been addressed, helping to ensure children remain healthy and safe at the setting.

### **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):

- ensure children have constant access to fresh drinking water
- update children's records to ensure all parental permission forms are signed by parents.

#### **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):

- ensure next steps are identified to inform planning and provide children with sufficient challenge.

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)