

Witchford Rackham Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector Lynn Lowery

Setting address Rackham C of E Primary School, Main Street, Witchford,
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Type of setting Childcare on non-domestic premises

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

The provider must provide a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must provide a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Childcare (Inspection) Regulations 2008 regulations 9 and 10).

The setting also makes provision for children older than the early years age group which is registered on the voluntary and/or compulsory part(s) of the Childcare Register. This report does not include an evaluation of that provision, but a comment about compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Register is included in Annex B.

Description of the setting

Witchford Rackham Pre-School is a committee run group. It opened 29 years ago, in 1980, and operates from the ground floor of a two storey house located within the grounds of the Rackham Primary School in Witchford.

A maximum of 24 children aged from two to five years may attend the pre-school at any one time. It is open from Monday to Thursday from 9.00 to 11.30 and from Monday to Friday from 12.30 to 3.00 during term time. A play scheme is in operation during some school holidays.

All children have access to a secure, enclosed outdoor play area. The building and grounds are accessible to children and adults with mobility difficulties or disabilities.

The pre-school is on the Early Years and compulsory Childcare Registers. There are currently 49 children on roll. Children come from the local area.

The pre-school employs eight suitably qualified staff. It supports children who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language. It works in partnership with the school.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Provision at Witchford Rackham Pre-School is good. It provides a bright and stimulating learning environment where children thoroughly enjoy their learning and make good progress towards achieving the early learning goals. Good leadership and management, based on systematic and accurate self-evaluation, ensures there is good continuous improvement. Staff are well-qualified and there is a very strong sense of teamwork which provides an excellent role model for the children. The pre-school is inclusive and provides good support for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and for whom English is an additional language. Links with parents, the school and the local community are excellent and continually developing.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- extend the range of strategies used to support children for whom English is an additional language
- use focussed observations of staff more frequently to support continuous professional development related to improving provision for children's learning.

The leadership and management of the early years provision

Parents say they are well informed about ongoing activities and their children's progress. They feel very welcome and appreciate the approachability of the manager and her staff. They appreciate the regular opportunities to meet with their children's key workers and value the opportunity to share and comment on the information in their children's assessment folders. They express their views through regular questionnaires and these have led to changes in practice.

Since her appointment, the manager has improved the quality of planning, assessment and environment. The recommendations from the last inspection have been implemented. Excellent links have been established with parents, the school and the local community. The pre-school is currently working closely with the school to further develop its assessment system and to improve the teaching of 'letters and sounds'. Planning is a team activity and is very thorough and monitored by the manager. Staff are formally observed for appraisal purposes but there is scope to undertake more regular observations to support continuous professional development for staff in relation to improving provision for children's learning. The work in relation to self-evaluation is accurate and robust. This, together with the improvements made since the last inspection demonstrate good capacity to improve further.

Regular use of the school hall and grounds, together with visits to and from the reception teachers, ensure a smooth transition into the school. Staff form a very strong team who are fully committed to improving practice. Together, they have accurately identified the areas requiring development and ensure they receive the training needed to achieve it.

The pre-school runs very smoothly and resources are thoughtfully selected, well used and carefully maintained. Safeguarding procedures fully meet statutory requirements and together with regular risk assessments, ensure the children are kept safe from harm. All the required policies and procedures are in place and documentation is rigorous, clear and easily accessible.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Children achieve well because provision is good. Activities engage their interest, so they are enthusiastic and try hard. All the six areas of learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage are covered each week through a combination of 'free play' and 'key activities'. These are carefully planned to ensure children continually build on their prior learning and take children's individual interests into account. This is based on information provided by parents when they fill in the children's 'learning leaves' each term.

Frequent and detailed observation and assessment of children takes place and staff are working closely with the school to ensure this information is helpful when children transfer. Key workers use this information to plan the next steps in individual children's learning. Children's assessment folders contain lots of

photographs of their activities and comments on their achievements. Parents really appreciate having the chance to look through and comment on them each term, and to receiving them when their children leave.

Children move freely between indoor and outdoor activities. There is a good balance of adult-led activities and those initiated by the children. Children are encouraged to show curiosity and independence. They love to choose which songs they sing at the beginning of the session and all join in enthusiastically with the actions. They are encouraged to care for the environment and they feed the birds and grow plants. Creative and physical development is promoted well. For example, children whiz around outside on wheeled toys, avoiding obstacles and developing their balance and co-ordination. During the inspection, they loved painting with their hands and feet and taking part in role play in the 'florists shop' and making paper flowers to sell. Staff actively promote the development of speaking and listening and there are good opportunities for children to develop early reading and writing skills, both indoors and outside. Activities to promote understanding of number are in constant use and number pictures or posters are displayed throughout the setting.

Children's welfare is very important to staff and children are extremely well cared for. Occasional accidents are dealt with professionally by staff with paediatric first aid qualifications. Children handle equipment safely because staff provide good help and guidance, for example, they learn to be 'scissor safe'. Children learn about road, rail and water safety and enjoyed the visit from the 'lollipop' lady. They also learn about 'stranger danger'. An excellent range of healthy snacks is provided and children and adults eat together very sociably. They understand the importance of eating healthy foods, cleaning their teeth and washing their hands before eating because they may have 'germs' on them.

Children's personal development is good because staff are aware of their individual needs, particularly supportive and are very good role models. They successfully promote thoughtful attitudes and the ability to share and take turns. Consequently, children behave well and enjoy learning. Staff are very supportive of children who have learning difficulties or disabilities and have established good links with external support agencies, so they are better able to provide effective, individualised support. They also support children who have English as an additional language well, but are keen to extend the range of strategies used to accelerate their progress.

Annex A: record of inspection judgements

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

Overall effectiveness

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	2

Leadership and management

How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	2
How effective is the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement?	2
How well does the setting work in partnership with parents and others?	1
How well are children safeguarded?	1

Quality and standards

How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?	1
How well are children helped to stay safe?	1
How well are children helped to be healthy?	1
How well are children helped to enjoy and achieve?	2
How well are children helped to make a positive contribution?	2
How well are children helped develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	2

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Annex B: the Childcare Register

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are:

Met