

Layer Preschool

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	203940
Inspection date	02/12/2009
Inspector	Hazel Meadows
Setting address	Queen Elizabeth Hall, New Cut, Layer-de-la-Haye, Colchester, Essex, CO2 0JU
Telephone number	01206 734348
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Type of setting	Childcare on non-domestic premises

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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*.

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Description of the setting

Layer Pre-School was established in 1972 and is managed by a voluntary committee. It operates from two halls at the Queen Elizabeth Hall in Layer-de-la-Haye, near Colchester. The building has level access and there are two accessible toilets off the main playroom. A secure, purpose built outside play area is available.

A maximum of 32 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. It is open each weekday during term time, from 9.00am to 3.00pm Monday to Friday with sessions from 9.00am to 11.30am and 12.30pm to 3.00pm. The group also offers a lunch club facility and some children stay all day. The group is registered by Ofsted on the Early Years Register. There are currently 72 children on roll who are within the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) age group. The setting supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who have English as an additional language.

The group employs six staff, with at least four staff working at each session. The person in charge is trained to Level 5. Three of the other staff are qualified to NVQ Level 3 and two are working towards Level 3. Layer Pre-school is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance (PSLA). It is registered to accept government funding for three and four year olds and receives support from the Essex County Council Early Years Support Team.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is satisfactory.

Children are settled and happy in the pre-school and develop trusting relationships with the staff. A satisfactory range of activities is provided to support children's progress through the EYFS. Inclusive practice is well promoted and supported by a positive attitude and approach to diversity. Positive partnerships are developed with parents and carers, ensuring children are offered consistent care and support. Most documentation, training and procedures are in place to promote children's welfare. Staff operate a key person system and are developing a method to monitor children's progress towards the early learning goals, which is regularly shared with their parents. Self-evaluation methods are utilised but do not always identify areas requiring improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To fully meet the specific requirements of the EYFS, the registered person must:

- review and update the safeguarding policy to ensure it includes the procedure to be followed in the event of an allegation being made against staff and ensure that all staff have secure knowledge and understanding of current safeguarding policies and procedures
- 02/01/2010

(Safeguarding and promoting children's welfare)

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

- utilise daily opportunities to increase and enhance children's learning, skills and independence, for example, counting and handing out the cups, pouring their own drinks, cutting their own pictures for sticking and putting on their own coats
- increase the variety of activities provided at morning and afternoon sessions and review the layout of room to ensure children experience a broad range of play and learning experience and are provided with sufficient challenge and interest
- review and develop further the child profiles to ensure they identify the child's next steps and clearly show their individual progress through the EYFS
- review planning to ensure it is based on next steps identified for individual children to support and enhance their ongoing progress and development
- review the variety and type of snacks offered to ensure healthy and nutritious options are provided and ensure children learn basic good hygiene habits through daily routines, for example, washing their hands thoroughly prior to snack and having easy access to tissues and a bin.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Staff are vigilant regarding children's safety and written risk assessments are undertaken for the premises and for outings, to minimise risks to children. There are procedures for emergency evacuation in place, which is regularly practiced, and any areas for improvement are noted, in order to be addressed and rectified. Sound procedures are in place to ensure staff's suitability to work with children. Most staff have some understanding of their responsibility to protect children, however, only one member of staff has attended up-to-date safeguarding children training regarding current safeguarding procedures. The group has a designated safeguarding officer plus local safeguarding contact details to refer to should they have concerns about a child. However, the safeguarding policy does not contain the required procedures for allegations made against staff. The committed staff have varying levels of experience and all staff have an early years qualification. They attend workshops to supplement and broaden their knowledge and skills. Staff development is encouraged and annual appraisals are completed. Regular staff meetings enable staff to plan forthcoming activities and reflect upon practice, plus the Ofsted self-evaluation form has recently been completed. However, not all areas requiring improvement have been identified or addressed.

The group promotes inclusive practice well. Staff have a positive attitude and approach towards diversity, which is reflected in some of the resources available. Any discriminatory behaviour or comments, from adults or children, are challenged and addressed well. Staff support and embrace children with special educational needs and/or disabilities or children for whom English is an additional language. They work closely with parents, and liaise with other childcare or health

professionals if required, to ensure each child receives appropriate support at an early stage. Comprehensive details are obtained about each child to support their welfare and signed consents are in place to ensure children are cared for according to their parent's wishes. All records are securely kept and accurately maintained.

Staff develop very trusting partnerships with parents. They work closely with parents to help children settle and promote their ongoing welfare. Parents are encouraged to share valuable information about children's likes, dislikes, family backgrounds, routines. This enables the child's key person to help them to settle quickly and offers the potential to establish a foundation for their future learning. Comments received from parents during the inspection are mostly positive. They state they receive regular feedback from their child's key person and most have seen their child's development profile. Parents are kept very well informed about pre-school issues through frequent discussions with the staff, notice boards and newsletters. Parents become actively involved in the pre-school life as they take on roles on the management committee and also help out on the session rota. Questionnaires are used to ascertain parent's views and any comments raised, for example, implementing a parent-rota induction procedure. Written policies have recently been reviewed although further updates are required. The pre-school has established effective links with the local school, to promote a smooth transition for the children into full-time school. The group seeks support from the PSLA and local authority advisory staff when required.

The quality and standards of the early years provision and outcomes for children

Children are happy and relaxed at the group. They are given time to settle as they arrive and their parents are welcome to initially stay to settle them if necessary. A satisfactory range of activities is set out by staff prior to their arrival. The pre-school has a broad range of good quality resources, however, activities are not always changed for the afternoon session or sufficiently varied during the sessions or from day to day. This limits the amount of ongoing interest, variety, fun and challenge available for the children, particularly those children who stay all day. Consequently, children are not enabled or encouraged to achieve their learning and development potential. Children become excited and more focussed when fresh activities are introduced. For example, they flocked around the modelling dough when it was introduced part way through a session. They excitedly explored the dough, chatting enthusiastically with the staff and one another about the colours, texture and what they were making. Children concentrate and persevere for considerable periods when activities interest and engage them, for example, playing in the water or with the modelling dough.

Children form very positive relationships with the staff who are caring and attentive to them, helping them to feel secure. Children are gaining confidence and many freely approach and talk to the staff and to visitors. Children's behaviour is generally good, particularly when they are well occupied. Staff work closely with parents over any particular behaviour issues to promote continuity of approach. Staff are positive role models and treat children with kindness and respect, valuing children's individuality and supporting well any children who have additional needs.

Children's awareness and appreciation of diversity is well promoted in the group through the positive attitudes of the staff and some of the resources plus specific activities, such as recognising different festivals such as Diwali, Christmas and Chinese New Year.

Children's creative play is satisfactorily promoted. They have occasional access to paint and play dough and an adult -initiated craft table is usually available. Musical instruments are readily available and an adequately resourced imaginative play area supports children's role play. Children enjoy singing rhymes at group time and are also learning songs for their Christmas play. Children have some opportunities to practice pre-writing skills, occasionally using the chalk boards or having access to paints. Opportunities to write for a purpose in their play are limited but occasionally offered through setting up the imaginative play area as a post office or shop. A writing table is used by a small number of children. Worksheets are sometimes used with the older children, which potentially limits their first hand experiences and exploration. Children learn to recognise their own names as they self-register and also find their names on their work trays. A well stocked book area is available but very rarely used by the children. Children are attentive to a story at large group time, well read by a member of staff using a big book enabling all children to see the pictures. Props are occasionally used to support story telling and engage the children. Children have regular access to technological equipment such as laptops and their mouse control skills are developing, however, it is sometimes difficult for them to hear the narrative on the laptop or use the mouse with their preferred hand.

Staff have a sound knowledge of the EYFS and some have received training. They are establishing a method of recording children's progress towards the using child profiles. Observations are mostly linked to the areas of learning but do not identify the next steps for the child or clearly show progression. Staff have a central planning sheet, outlining resources linked to the areas of learning but these are primarily for the whole group and rarely include any identified next steps or plans for individual children. Opportunities to develop and increase children's learning and independence are not always fully utilised by staff. For example, at snack time children rarely have chance to pour their own drink and are not encouraged to hand out or count the number of plates or cups required.

Children are mostly learning good hygiene practice through regular routines. They wash their hands, some with support, after using the toilet and anti-bacterial hand gel is used prior to snack and lunchtime, although some children may not always clean their hands thoroughly enough using this method. Mostly healthy snacks, such as milk, fruit and breadsticks are offered, promoting children's understanding of healthy eating. Water is usually available, ensuring the children are well hydrated. Children have regular opportunities for fresh air and exercise in the well-equipped outdoor area. They use equipment such as climbing frames and slides and ride on toys, to help develop their physical skills and coordination. Children learn to keep themselves safe through discussions and reminders from the staff, for example, walking indoors and not tipping the chairs. Outings are used as opportunities to help children understand about road safety and to stay with known adults.

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

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	3
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	3

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	3
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding	3
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	3
The effectiveness of partnerships	2
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	2

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	3
The extent to which children feel safe	3
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	2
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	3

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