

Beechoak Farm Montessori Preschool

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector

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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*.

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).

Children only attend this setting before and/or after the school day and/or during the school holidays. The judgements in this report reflect the quality of early years provision offered to children during those periods.

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.

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Description of the setting

Beechoak Farm Montessori Preschool opened in 1996. The setting operates from converted farm buildings in the High Beech area of Epping Forest, Essex. All children share access to an extensive and secure garden area. A maximum of 48 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school opens five days a week from 8.00 am to 5.00pm.

There are currently 100 children aged from two to five years on roll. Children aged three and four years receive funding for early education. Children attend for a variety of sessions, full days or out of school care. The pre-school serves the local community and wider areas. The setting supports a small number of children who have special educational needs.

This provision is registered by Ofsted on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register.

The pre-school employs 14 early years staff, and four ancillary staff. Thirteen of the staff, including the managers, hold appropriate early years qualifications. There are currently five staff members extending their early years qualification. The setting receives support from both the local authority, the Pre-School Learning Alliance (PSLA).

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

Children in the early years are making excellent progress in all areas of their development, as staff have an extensive understanding of the requirements set out in Early Years Foundation Stage and early childhood development. Staff have a fundamental understanding of how children learn through the provision of spontaneous activities and exceptionally well-planned initiated play. The uniqueness of the setting through the exceptional outdoor environment combined with the ideally- sized group rooms, provides both warmth and security for settled indoor play and vigorous and energetic activities when outside. Partnership work with parents and others is integral within the setting, ensuring excellent continuity of care and transitions. Self-evaluation systems are in place, however, they are not yet fully embedded within the provision's practice.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the high quality early years provision the registered person should consider:

- reviewing and revising self-evaluation systems to ensure reflective and continuous progression.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Documentation is exceptionally well organised, promoting an efficient and safe management of the provision. Policies and procedures are extensive and individual to the setting, and they fully support the practice of the staff team. Staff's recruitment procedures are robust to ensure suitable staff are employed at the provision. Staff have an excellent understanding in safeguarding children and procedures to follow in the event of a concern. The designated staff member has recently attended training and they ensure updated information is passed onto all the staff. Staff have a very good understanding of what constitutes safe working practices and they are consistently vigilant when working with children. Parents are fully informed of the pre-school's role in protecting children; this includes the recording of existing injuries, further promoting children's welfare. All areas of the premises, both indoors and outside are risked assessed, this ensures all potential hazards are minimised. There are effective security systems into and around the setting, including cameras and interconnecting telephones, ensuring children are monitored at all times and that they are safe and secure.

The owners, managers and all of the staff have a strong very strong commitment to providing the best possible outcomes for children as they passionately believe in striving and maintaining very good standards of care. The staff team is well trained as there is a strong focus on continued professional development, to drive future improvements. There are exciting planned developments, for example, developing further the exciting garden area for children. Ample space is provided for children to explore in hygienic and safe conditions and a great deal of care and thought is put into the provision. The organisation of the physical environment and deployment of resources, ensure that staff successfully create a stimulating, warm and exciting environment for all the children. There is also an exciting range of exceedingly high-quality resources and equipment, across all areas of play. Self-evaluation is in place identifying their strengths and areas for development; however, self-assessment is not yet fully embedded within the provision.

The management and staff recognise the value and importance of fully including the parents as it is integral to the well-being of the children in their care. The procedures for involving parents and keeping them informed of their children's development are comprehensive and very effective. Parents' views are actively sought through questionnaires or discussions, and there is both written and verbal daily feedback. Excellent quality notices, newsletters and the website ensure parents are extensively informed. Parents are very keen to express their satisfaction and say they are delighted with the care and education their children receive. Written comments include, children's development both socially and educationally is extensively well supported and that their child is given an excellent grounding for the future. Additional comments include staff's commitment, effectiveness and teamwork. Very good links have been developed with nearby primary schools and other agencies to ensure effective continuity of care and transitions.

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

Planning, observations and assessments arrangements have been extensively embedded and the Montessori curriculum is successfully weaved through the planning. A cyclical process has been established within all elements of planning arrangements, this ensures children's developmental progress and interests inform future activity plans. Activity plans extensively cover the six areas of learning and the provision of activities successfully capture children's interests and maintains both their curiosity and attention, therefore extending and consolidating children's play and learning. Staff's interactions are consistently purposeful, ensuring that they take time to explain and guide children in their play, for example, playing on the tricycles in the designated bike section. Children's behaviour is very good as they share and co-operate in their play and close friendships are formed within their peer groups. The celebration tree celebrates children's individual achievements, promoting their self-esteem and confidence. All children successfully regulate their play as they know the clear rules of the pre-school, this includes waiting for their turn to play with the bikes. Inclusion and diversity is exceptionally promoted as children and staff value everyone's differences and similarities. Makaton signing is fully embedded within staff's practices supporting all children across the age range. Adaptations, to resources, play equipment and the physical environment are made to support all the children.

All children are happy, contented, confident and secure; they show curiosity in their play, as they ask lots of questions and enjoy trying out new activities. Children are confident talkers; they use a very good range of vocabulary and descriptive language to express their thoughts, feelings and recent experiences, for example, gardening at home and describing slimy worms and snails. Problem solving, reasoning and numeracy are extensively promoted through both well-planned activities and daily routines. Staff use mathematical language in their conversations with children to further consolidate their learning. Children have extensive opportunities to learn about the natural world, they visit the farm animals within the grounds and participate on nature walks through the fields to see the horses. The children particularly enjoyed squelching through the mud and making observations and comments about the mole hills. Children have exceptional opportunities to participate in a very good range of creative activities, the younger children were very skilful in hand and foot painting, as they made meaningful marks. Children also enjoyed the outdoor painting activity, of throwing painted tennis balls at a large cloth sheet.

The extensive range of mark-making activities, in both spontaneous play and focus activities helps all children's emergent writing skills, and the older and more able children are beginning to write their own names. The designated book corners in all the group rooms are warm and inviting for children and the extensive range of books offer both instruction and delight. Children enjoy nursery and action rhymes such as 'Twinkle Little Star' and 'Roly Poly'. There is a very good range of resources and well-planned activities for children to learn about other cultures and festivals. The outdoor area is a fabulous play space for children, as they are able see the farm animals on a daily basis, go on nature walks, use the fully enclosed

field area and the large dry play area. All children are fully engrossed in the outdoor play, as staff's interactions are purposeful. The bikes, messy play, climbing frame, balancing activities such as tyres and stepping stones are particular favourites of the children.

Children's healthy lifestyles are exceptionally well promoted as they are provided with high quality and nutritious meals and snacks. All meals and snacks are prepared on site, ingredients are locally sourced and children are involved in the planning of menus. All nappy changing and bathroom areas are maintained to a high standard, and staff ensure privacy for all the children while using the bathroom facilities. Robust systems are in place to support children with specific dietary needs, this includes individual care, and ensuring all staff are fully informed. Children have an excellent understanding of their own personal safety, they are confident to say 'no', and they know about 'stranger danger'. All children participate in fire drills and they move around all areas of the provision safely and with confidence. Consequently, children's health and well-being is successfully and extensively promoted.

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?	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	1

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	1
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding	1
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	1
The effectiveness of partnerships	1
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	1

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	1
The extent to which children feel safe	1
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	1
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	1

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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

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