

Mersea Island Nursery School & Wraparound Care

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspection date	01/12/2009
Inspector	Robert Greatrex
Setting address	Mersea Island School, Barfield Road, West Mersea, COLCHESTER, Essex, CO5 8QX
Telephone number	01206 382736
Email	admin@merseaisland.sol.co.uk
Type of setting	Childcare on non-domestic premises

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Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

T: 08456 404040
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

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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).

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

Mersea Island Nursery School & Wraparound Care opened in 2004 and is on the Early Years Register and the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register for a maximum of 52 children between two and eight years of age. Of the 45 children on roll currently, 27 receive funding for nursery education.

The setting can support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and also supports children who speak English as an additional language. It provides a nursery and wraparound care provision each weekday from 7.00am until 6.00pm during term-times. It is run by a management committee and operates from a purpose built unit in the grounds of Mersea Island School. The accommodation is suitable to cater for children and adults with disabilities. Seven staff work with the children. All have suitable early years qualifications. The setting is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Overall, the quality of the provision is good, it meets the needs of the early years children well, in a fully inclusive environment. Parents agree care for the children is at the heart of everything the setting does; one described it, 'the nursery is incredibly caring'. Relationships with parents are strong and improvements since the last inspection enable parents to be more active partners in their children's developments. Staff are well qualified and work very well as a team therefore the setting runs very effectively. Self evaluation is satisfactory so the setting has a satisfactory capacity to improve further.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- to further improve the early years provision the registered person should use self-evaluation to develop provision more methodically, including the views of staff and parents
- to further improve the early years provision the registered person should seek ways to improve the outdoor provision to meet the full range of requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children and their parents know that care is a high priority in the setting and this contributes to their confidence. The key person scheme is used effectively, but equally the staff team is well established and all have strong relationships with all children and their parents. Thorough procedures ensure health and safety is good

and safeguarding equally comprehensive.

Staff form an effective team so that each day's routines run smoothly. Although already suitably qualified, all staff have a very strong commitment to their continuing professional development, constantly looking to improve and share their knowledge. Consequently, the quality of the provision is good because staff apply their expertise so well. Planning and assessment is an example of this and a current focus for improvement. Ideas are drawn from other settings and training attended as staff discuss and modify their present practice in order to plan an approach responding more closely to children's interests.

Relationships with parents are good. Parents particularly welcome the 'busy books' which give them insight into the day's events so that they can support their children's development better at home. Parents' meetings give good opportunities to discuss their children's progress as recorded in their comprehensive profiles. These usefully include 'next steps' in each area of learning so that, once again, home and setting can work together so progress is good. This is a good development since the last inspection.

The setting is fully inclusive and staff regularly review what they do so there is a strong commitment to equal opportunities and meeting children's diverse needs. Good links with other providers and agencies means that advice and guidance is available to parents.

A particular strength is the thorough preparation for nursery and beyond, which parents state make transitions very smooth. Home visits precede nursery and enable staff to thoroughly know the children, their needs, attributes and interests. The very close relationship with the school enables children to learn side-by-side with older peers and consequently to see reception as a natural progression. Parents state that links are excellent and their children hardly recognise any change.

Staff constantly strive to improve their practice so that children have good provision and make good progress. A survey of parents, as part of course undertaken by a member of staff, led to useful improvements. However, neither staff nor parents are regularly or systematically asked their views to inform development and there is no clear plan for future improvement. The management committee holds relatively short meetings infrequently and so is of limited effectiveness.

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

Parents state that their children are keen and happy to attend the setting, knowing that they will be well cared for. Handover is organised very carefully so that it is a warm and positive time. 'He loves nursery and 'wrap-around', and cries when he can't stay,' a view typical of parents.

Parents feel their children do well partly because activities provided are relevant to

their interests; 'he is 100 per cent motivated by the interesting tasks,' a typical comment. Good planning means that children have activities that build on previous achievements and extend those in which they are curious. Children's interest in vegetables and fruit, discussed at snack-time, extended into growing cress and, with parents help, digging and preparing ground for springtime planting. A good range of visits, such as to the beach, extend previous learning in the setting.

When undertaking staff-led activities, children generally concentrate well. When this is broken by activities elsewhere in the room, staff are skilled at techniques that re-establish focus and interest quickly. Staff take every opportunity to extend language such as 'quicker', 'slower', 'louder' and 'quieter' so children's vocabulary develops well. Progress is good overall because children are very interested in these tasks and keen to please. Parents talk about how their children leave the setting enthused by all they have done and learnt.

Children's attitudes to learning are positive as they persevere with interesting tasks. All make good progress because staff recognise, for example, when boys significantly outnumber girls and ensure all get the opportunity to contribute to discussions. They are curious, imaginative and keen to explore different activities. A child producing a carefully-painted flower added human features accurately and stated, 'Look, it's a dancing flower'. Parents state that children with special educational needs and/or disabilities also make good progress because the setting works very closely with specialists to provide a suitably modified curriculum. Children confidently make choices and work independently because staff provide many good opportunities and encourage them to select tasks and learn for themselves. Equally, children know good staffing levels means there is always help on hand if they need it. Children know to wash their hands before eating healthy snacks. They recognise that the heart beats quicker after exercise. They are beginning to have an awareness of safety because they are well trained, for example, in the use of scissors. They are cooperative with one another and work well, particularly with a small group of friends. Behaviour is generally good because children are clear about staff expectations of them, and want to please.

Although the accommodation is new and has many good features, the room is relatively small and has no space where staff can easily do focussed, concentrated activities with specific groups. Given the relatively wide age range, this adversely affects some aspects of children's development. Staff recognise this, and the need to improve the outdoors where a generous grassed area is often unusable and there is insufficient covered area to offer the full range of activities required. The accommodation also creates difficulties when many children arrive or leave at the same time.

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?	2
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?	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	2
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding	2
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

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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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

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