

Penenden Heath Pre-School

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*.

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Description of the setting

Penenden Heath Pre-School opened in 1966 and is committee run, they operate from one main room in a social club hall in Maidstone, Kent. There are no stairs or steps and toilets are on the ground floor. There is also a ramp in place for easy wheelchair access. A maximum of 24 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open each weekday, term time only, from 9am to 2.45pm, except for Tuesdays when it closes at 11.30am. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area. There are currently 64 children in the early years age group on roll. Children come from the local community. The pre-school currently supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and also those who speak English as an additional language. The pre-school employs 12 staff. There are nine staff, including the supervisors, who hold appropriate early years qualifications. There are three staff who are working towards a qualification. The setting is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance. They also receive support from the local authority. The provision is registered on the Early Years Register only.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

There are very effective systems in place to ensure the needs of the children are met and their welfare and well-being is safeguarded. The staff and committee work extremely well as a team. The methods and outcomes in place for driving improvement are outstanding. The provision enables every child to enjoy and achieve in a safe, welcoming and stimulating environment. The staff team have established positive and strong relationships with parents and the children they care for, promoting good quality outcomes for the children.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- maintain a regular two-way flow of information, knowledge and expertise between parents and practitioners, to help support and extend children's learning and development
- review and improve the opportunities to ensure children are provided children with more choices in their play, helping to further promote their independence.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The provision has very clear and effective policies, strategies and procedures in place, to ensure children's well-being and welfare is promoted at all times. A designated member of staff is responsible for safeguarding and is very dedicated

to her role. She ensures the procedures in place are effective and that children are protected at all times. Excellent risk assessments with ongoing safety checks minimise risks of accidental injury and cross contamination to children. All staff have a good understanding of the signs and symptoms of abuse and local safeguarding children procedures. They follow effective guidance and know what to do in the event of a concern to ensure that children's safety and welfare is well protected. Adults are appropriately vetted and their ongoing suitability is monitored to ensure they remain fit to work with the children. Clear security measures are in place and the details of any visitors are recorded.

The provision has a very clear commitment to maintaining continuous improvement. This is evident in several areas that have been addressed thoroughly as a result of recommendations raised. There are excellent processes in place which involve staff, committee members and parents in driving improvement, including a format for recording new ideas or identifying priority areas for change. Recent advancements include updating the policy documents and continuing to monitor and amend the methods for observational assessments. The deployment of resources and staff are good. Children are able to locate and access the toys and resources on offer, although self-select storage limits some choices for children. One-to-one supervision, staff meetings and appraisals are provided for all staff. As a result, they really work well as a team and support the children's care and learning effectively.

Equality and diversity is given good attention throughout the setting. For example, parents and children are actively involved in much of the decision making and equal provision is made for every child, regardless of personal background. When required, staff are able to provide parents with information in their home languages. A technical language aid is also used to help give immediate help to both children and adults, with access to useful words and phrases in several languages. The observation, assessment and planning systems help meet each child's unique learning needs. Toys, resources and experiences promote many positive images of diversity and enable children to learn about the differences between themselves and other people in today's society.

The systems for self-evaluation are very good. Although the provider has not yet fully completed the Ofsted document, the highly effective measures in place ensure the play environment for children improves proficiently and continuously. Recent improvements include, updating the policy documents, staff attendance at many of the offered training events and reviewing the methods for observational assessments. A further improvement currently being evaluated is the access to the recently erected well-equipped and secure outdoor play area. Thus, enabling children to free-flow between indoor and outside play spaces. Overall, improvements have had a very positive impact on the outcomes for children.

The partnerships with other settings is well established and showing success. Information is shared about children's progress and specific needs, however, the current process is not clear in how it fully supports and extends children's learning and development. Good relationships with the local primary school help to provide children with smooth transitions into reception classes. The engagement between the setting and parents is positive and meets the needs of the children very well. A

successful key person system ensures information is shared, with daily verbal exchanges taking place. Parents receive a warm welcome and those spoken to feel their children are happy within the setting and making good progress. They know that staff are helping them to learn and develop effectively. Parents are able to contribute their views in writing and verbally. They are also encouraged to share their knowledge and skills with the children and contribute to their achievements. This helps to provide children with ongoing consistency of care and learning.

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

Children are happy and settle well in the warm, welcoming and busy environment. Staff work hard to ensure they support children's needs effectively. The provision is well organised with plenty of stimulating activities and resources available, however, there is limited self-select storage which means some activities are more adult-led than others, slightly reducing the opportunities for children to further develop their independence. Children enjoy the challenge of finding their own names and special symbols on cards so they can self-register. A good range of posters from how to wash their hands properly to pictures with letters of the alphabet, are displayed and help children develop early literacy skills. Although free-flow play between indoors and the outside area is not yet possible, children are able to access and enjoy the new and well-equipped garden space on a daily basis. This provides good opportunities for children to develop their physical skills. Children spend time talking about their home experiences with staff, at snack time for example. Staff also spend quality time engaging them in meaningful interaction to extend their communication and language skills. A computer is always on and available throughout every session. Appropriate educational software encourages children to learn how to follow simple instructions and tasks. They are developing good problem-solving and hand-to-eye coordination skills.

Children explore number, shapes and measures, for instance, during construction activities, board games, stories and rhymes. Children investigate the texture of paint and glitter as they create sea and sand pictures. Role play activities are currently available in the outdoor area, these and small world resources encourage children to mimic real life scenarios through their imaginative play. Mark making resources are readily available and children paint, draw and write as they choose. The current observation and assessment systems are effective in charting children's progress from when they begin at the setting to when they leave. Clear evaluative text and examples of children's achievements show how they move forward in their learning. Planning includes all the different areas of learning and builds on every child's existing interests and abilities.

All children demonstrate good, secure relationships with the staff caring for them. They display confidence and ask for support if needed. They learn about keeping themselves and others safe, for example, by practising the emergency evacuation procedure regularly. Children also learn why staff need to supervise their access to the outdoor play area. This effective input helps all children to learn about personal safety.

The good health and well-being of the children is promoted very well. They are often actively involved in preparing their own snacks and help themselves to drinks. They are beginning to learn about growing their own produce, such as beetroot and strawberries. Most of the snacks offered are healthy and nutritious. Parents provide food for their children if they remain at the setting for lunchtime. Parents are encouraged to provide healthy options in children's lunchboxes to maintain healthy eating at lunchtime. Staff adopt clear hygiene routines and most children can wash their hands confidently and independently. They know that they need to do this to 'get rid of germs', as one child pointed out. Physical activity is available through ongoing indoor and outdoor opportunities, helping children to develop an awareness of the importance of maintaining healthy lifestyles.

Appropriate and acceptable behaviour is encouraged by staff who make sure they are good role models. They praise children for their individual achievements and good behaviour and help them learn about sharing and taking turns. Staff show respect for the children and listen to them, responding to their questions and interacting with genuine interest. This helps children to feel valued and promotes their confidence and self-esteem well.

Staff observe and assess children's developmental needs and put in place strategies to ensure all children achieve and make good progress. Planning takes into account children's interests, likes and next steps, so staff can provide activities that are popular and challenging. The staff provide children with a range of options that cover all the development areas within the Early Years Foundation Stage. Overall, the opportunities provided help each child make good progress and develop essential skills needed for their future learning and development.

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	2

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	1
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	2
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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