

Tolleshunt Knights Co-operative Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector	Patricia Mary Champion
Setting address	Tolleshunt Knights Village Hall, Top Road, Tolleshunt Knights, Maldon, Essex, CM9 8ET
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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

Tolleshunt Knight Co-operative Playgroup is run by a committee. It opened in 1971 and operates from the village hall in Tolleshunt Knights, Essex. All children share access to a secure, enclosed outdoor play area. A maximum of 26 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school opens five days a week during school term-times. Session times are from 09.30am until 12.00pm each morning, with an optional lunch club operating from 12.00pm until 01.25pm on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday.

There are currently 44 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. The pre-school serves the local community and surrounding areas. The provision is registered by Ofsted on the Early Years Register.

The pre-school employs eight staff, seven of whom, including the managers, hold appropriate early years qualifications. The setting receives support from the local authority.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a secure and safe environment. The staff have established good working partnerships to ensure that they are fully aware of each child's unique needs. Children make sound progress in their learning and are starting to take decisions and make some choices about the activities they engage in. The new committee, supervisors and staff team are starting to work together effectively to identify and plan future improvements and are committed to enhancing outcomes for children.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- develop further the outdoor area so that it consistently offers children freedom to explore and use their senses with experiences linked to all areas of learning
- evaluate and review the routine and activity planning to improve the opportunities for children to select and use activities and resources independently, and to ensure that they consistently receive learning experiences tailored to their individual needs
- enhance the partnership with parents by sharing more information about children's next steps in learning and encourage parents to contribute their observations to the children's development records.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

There are effective policies and procedures which meet the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and ensure children are safe and protected. Staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities relating to child protection and the procedures to follow should they have any concerns about any child in their care. Comprehensive risk assessments are maintained and there are systems in place to ensure children are able to play safely, both inside and outside. Recruitment and vetting procedures are robust and all staff have been cleared as suitable to work with the children. The staff are extremely vigilant about the security of the setting. The main entrance door is alarmed and a visitors book is used to record the names of anyone entering the setting and also the purpose of their visit.

Since the last inspection there have been significant changes to the committee and management of the pre-school. The two new managers are motivated and reflect appropriately on the service they provide. Suitable action plans are devised to address any areas for improvement. The staff are aware that by developing the range of outdoor activities children will be offered more freedom to explore and use their senses, with additional experiences linked to all areas of learning. An appraisal system identifies staff training requirements and courses are regularly attended to keep adults updated on health and safety issues.

The activity programme is varied and includes a range of both adult and child-led activities. However, midway through each session much of the core play provision is cleared away for snack time, resulting in children then having more limited opportunities to take decisions and make choices in their play. Children are appropriately supervised as the required staffing levels are always met. However, sometimes staff are not deployed effectively as they are overly focussed on dealing with domestic tasks, such as tidying away equipment, rather than working directly with the children. Consequently, activities are not always tailored to children's individual needs and they are not consistently encouraged to learn as much as they can.

The staff understand the importance of working in partnership with parents and with other professionals to promote individual children's welfare and development. Good links have been made with local primary schools so that children have smooth transitions into full-time education. There is a strong partnership with a nearby pre-school and children and staff take part in joint activities or events, such as sports day. Improved links with other early years settings in the area are now developing. Parents are made to feel very welcome. They become involved in the running of the pre-school by joining the committee or by helping with fundraising. Parents become involved in their child's learning through providing items of interest for 'show and tell', sharing the adventures of the pre-school teddy bear or by participation in the book share scheme. Annual open days are now held so parents can view their children's assessment records and meet with key persons. However, parents are not yet encouraged to regularly contribute to their child's assessment records and next steps are not yet shared in a meaningful way. Parents speak very warmly about the caring, approachable staff team. They really

appreciate the key person system and the way children settle confidently into the pre-school.

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

Children are happy as they play in a bright, safe and spacious play environment. The majority of children confidently leave their parents and seek out their friends or find an activity to interest them when they arrive. The staff are caring, calm role models and consequently, children are well-behaved and keen to develop new skills. Staff mostly use a reasonable range of teaching methods and there are sufficient resources to provide activities and experiences linked to the six areas of learning. Assessment records are generally consistent in quality and activities are usually planned prior to children's arrival.

There is a suitable level of challenge to ensure that children make steady progress towards the early learning goals. Observations are completed by key persons and transferred to the children's individual profiles, supported by photographs of achievements and some examples of children's work. The key persons identify children's next steps in learning and share this information at staff meetings. The managers also identify how additional challenge can be offered to the older or more able children and plan activities for lunch club regarding number recognition, cutting skills, physical skills and recognising shapes.

Children learn about their own personal safety and the consequences of their actions. They know that it is safer to walk than run while indoors and practise fire drills so that they can swiftly evacuate the premises in an emergency. Children understand the need for good health and hygiene routines. They always wash their hands or use sanitising gel prior to eating and use paper towels to avoid the risk of cross-infection. Children are offered fresh fruit each day at snack time and activities are planned so that children can discover and talk about the food that is good for them. Independence skills are developed when children manage their lunch boxes or spread butter onto bread for snack. The outdoor area is currently predominately used to develop children's physical skills. Children confidently use a range of wheeled toys, such as bicycles and scooters and adeptly steer and manoeuvre them to avoid obstacles. They recognise the effect that exercise has on their bodies and confidently tell staff when they feel thirsty. Staff are very mindful of hot weather and ensure that children have plenty to drink and wear sun hats.

The inclusive nature of the pre-school ensures that children readily participate in the activities. Children learn about the wider world because there is a suitable range of books and resources that portray positive images of diversity. Various cultural and religious festivals are followed throughout the year. Children learn to use the computer with adult support and are developing suitable communication, literacy and numeracy skills required for future learning.

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	3
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

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	2
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	3
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	3

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