

Mendlesham Pre-school

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	508616
Inspection date	14/07/2010
Inspector	Janet Keeling

Setting address	Small Hall, Community Centre, Old Station Road, Mendlesham, Stowmarket, Suffolk, IP14 5RT
Telephone number	01449 766041
Email	
Type of setting	Childcare on non-domestic premises

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

T: 0300 123 1231
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

Mendlesham Pre-school opened in the 1970's and is managed by a voluntary management committee. It operates from facilities at Mendlesham Community Centre in the village of Mendlesham, Suffolk. The group have access to the small hall, toilet and kitchen facilities. There is access to an enclosed area for outdoor play. The group serves children and families from the local and surrounding areas.

The setting is registered by Ofsted on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. A maximum of 26 children from two to under eight years may attend the setting at any one time. There are currently 36 children on roll, all of whom are within the Early Years Foundation Stage. The setting receives funding for early years education.

The group opens from 9.00am to 11.30am and from 12.45pm to 3.15pm, Mondays to Fridays. The group is open during school term times only. A lunch club operates from 11.30am to 12.45pm each day where children can either have a cooked meal from the school canteen or bring in their own packed lunch. The group have procedures in place to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and for children who speak English as an additional language.

There are nine members of staff that work directly with the children, of whom six 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 good.

Children are confident, independent and relish their time at this very welcoming pre-school group. Staff are highly motivated, work well as a team and have a good understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework, consequently, children make excellent progress in their learning and development. Staff offer a fully inclusive service where the uniqueness of each child is recognised and celebrated. Highly successful partnerships with parents and other agencies have been established, ensuring children's needs are fully supported. The pre-school is led by an experienced, highly motivated and extremely enthusiastic manager who demonstrates a dedicated approach towards continuous improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- review and develop the daily risk assessment procedures to ensure they clearly demonstrate what action has been taken to minimise all identified risks to children
- ensure children's starting points in their learning are established on admission

to the setting.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Good priority is given to safeguarding children. All staff have an up to date understanding of safeguarding issues and are fully aware of the procedures to follow should they be concerned about a child in their care. Effective procedures for the recruitment and vetting of staff are in place, together with effective procedures for the induction of new staff. All staff are very competent, demonstrate an excellent understanding of their roles and responsibilities and have a good understanding of health and safety issues. Risk assessments are completed and cover all aspects of the learning environment and outings. However, the daily risk assessments do not clearly demonstrate what action has been taken to minimise identified risks to children. Staff routinely verify the identity of all visitors to the pre-school group and have a visitors' book in place. There are also effective procedures in place for the safe arrival and collection of children.

Deployment of resources is outstanding. For example, staff are successfully deployed to support the children's learning and welfare and make excellent use of available space both indoors and outdoors. The environment is extremely well organised despite using a shared building, where they have to set up and clear away at the end of each session.

The manager and staff are very motivated and passionate about their work, they strive to improve practice at all times and have successfully met all recommendations made at the previous inspection. Regular staff meetings provide valuable opportunities for staff to share good practice and to identify any training needs, whilst weekly planning meetings ensure that staff have quality time to plan the next week's programme of activities. A positive equality and diversity policy outlines a commitment to promoting inclusive practice, ensuring all children can achieve as well as they can regardless of their background. The manager and staff team demonstrate a strong commitment to working with external agencies to support the inclusion of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Excellent links have been established with the reception class teacher at the host school where pre-school children enjoy joint activities with the reception class children. These joint activities are ongoing throughout the year and provide valuable opportunities for the pre-school children to become familiar with their new learning environment.

Partnerships with parents are outstanding. A wealth of information is gained about a child before they commence at the pre-school, ensuring that the care provided is consistent and appropriate to their individual needs. Parents are warmly welcomed by staff and clearly feel very comfortable within the setting. The key person system strengthens links with parents and fully supports children's wellbeing. Parents access a range of information regarding the group, for example, prior to their child's admission parents receive a welcome pack which outlines the setting's ethos. Parents also have access to the group's policies and procedures, regular newsletters and a parents' notice board. The daily exchange of information

between staff and parents ensures that children's changing needs are consistently met. Children benefit greatly from the warm and relaxed relationships that have been established between their parents and the pre-school staff. Parents expressed very positive views during the inspection. Comments included, 'staff are very friendly and approachable' and 'caring and professional'. Parents also say they are extremely pleased with the excellent care and learning opportunities that are provided for their children. Staff have recognised the need to establish children's starting points on admission to the setting.

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

Children thrive in this vibrant, welcoming and child centred environment. Space is imaginatively organised, allowing children to make choices about their own learning and play. Children benefit enormously from the 'free flow' access between the stimulating indoor and outdoor environments. There is a good balance of adult led and child initiated activities that result in children being active learners, creative and able to think critically. Children respond to challenges with enthusiasm and show good levels of independence, curiosity and imagination. Staff interaction is inspiring, staff know the children very well, are aware of their individual learning needs, ask open ended questions and build on what children already know. Children work well independently and with their peers and are keen to share their ideas with the staff. All children are valued and treated with equal concern with any specific requirements being met sensitively through discussion with parents and other professionals. Staff have a very good understanding of children's individual learning needs as they observe and record information on a daily basis. Information is evaluated and used to inform future planning. On admission to the setting, information is obtained from parents and documented, however, whilst children's individual care needs are clearly recorded, children's starting points in their learning are not fully established. All children have a 'learning journey' folder, which contains both photographic and written information of children's learning, achievements and records of children's own work. These folders are shared regularly with parents and are available for parents to see at any time.

Children make excellent progress towards the early learning goals because staff have a detailed knowledge and understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework. There is a true sense of belonging at the pre-school as children immerse themselves in their surroundings and relish an excellent range of first hand learning experiences. For example, there was great excitement as a group of children played with the train and track, the children chatted happily to each other about the trains; 'look', said one child, 'it's a tank engine!'. Another group of children were engaged in a painting activity, they carefully selected their favourite colour paint and had great fun designing their pictures. Outdoors, children were busy digging in the soil, constructing a wall, repairing a tyre with their tool-kit and exploring the 'Mystery Machine'. Whilst another group of children gathered around the covered sand tray to watch with delight as a tiny spider crawled over the lid. Children are developing a love for books as they freely access a wide range of titles in the book corner and sit attentively at story time. Children listened carefully to the story of 'Titch', they enthusiastically interacted when asked a question and

delighted in predicting what was going to happen next! Children learn to recognise their own names as they self register each morning and are encouraged to write their names on their work. Children enjoy music as they join in with a range of songs and action rhymes, for example, there was great fun and lots of enthusiasm as the children tunefully sang 'Twinkle Twinkle Little Star' and 'Once I Caught A Fish Alive'. Children's creativity is fully supported through a range of role play equipment, construction toys and access to a wide range of media, such as, chalks, paint, sand and water. In the creative area children squeeze, press, roll and cut play dough using a variety of tools and equipment. There was great excitement as one child described the dough as 'squishy,' 'soft' and 'cold', whilst another child said, 'I have made a tree!'. Children explore their natural environment as they go 'bug hunting' around the edge of the playing fields and plant vegetables and flowers in pots in the garden area. Children also benefit from planned visits to places, such as, the local woods, the pig farm, Lowestoft beach and to 'Monsters' in nearby Diss.

Children's behaviour is very good. Gentle reminders from staff help children develop a sense of right and wrong and as a result, children learn to negotiate, share toys, take turns with equipment and show consideration for each other as they play together. Children's achievements at home are recognised in the group through the use of a 'wow board', where parents are encouraged to share information about 'wow' moments at home. Children are beginning to develop an understanding of diversity as staff encourage positive, open discussion about people's similarities and differences and as they celebrate cultural festivals throughout the year. Children learn how to stay safe as staff use everyday opportunities to reinforce their knowledge and understanding. For example, children regularly engage in emergency evacuation procedures and are gently reminded to use equipment safely. Children develop good hygiene practices through established daily routines, for example, children understand that tissues are placed in the bin after use and routinely wash their hands before snacks and after using the toilet. Consequently, the risk of cross infection is minimised. Children develop a good understanding of healthy eating through activities and discussion with staff. They enjoy a wide variety of fresh fruit at snack time and have access to drinking water throughout the session. In addition, children know that exercise is good for them. For example, children relish the outdoor play opportunities and enjoy music and movement sessions. Children develop a good sense of responsibility as they help to collect cups and plates at snack time and to help put toys away after they have finished playing with them. Children demonstrate that they are acquiring skills that will help them in the future and prepare them for their transition from the pre-school into school.

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	2
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	1
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	1
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	1

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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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	1
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