

Maldon Community Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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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).

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

Maldon Community Pre-school is run by a committee. It opened in 1972 and operates from a demountable building within the grounds of Maldon Primary School. All children share access to a secure, enclosed, outdoor play area. A maximum of 16 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school opens five days a week during school term times. Sessions times are from 9:00am to 3:05pm from Monday to Friday.

There are currently 42 children aged from two to five years on roll, all of who are within the early years age range. Of these, 37 children receive funding for early education. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The pre-school serves the local community. The setting supports a small number of children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs three members of staff. Two members of staff have National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) Level 3 and the other member of staff has NVQ Level 2. The setting receives support from the local authority, the Pre-school Learning Alliance (PLA), Maldon Children's Centre and the Maldon Cluster Group. The setting has a disabled ramp which facilitates access for children who may require disabled access. The setting is registered on the Early Years Register.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Maldon is a good pre-school because the children's learning and development are promoted well in a conducive and caring environment. All children are included in the range of activities, the use of equipment and resources, and on local outdoor trips. Parents and carers are confident about the quality of the care and support their children receive, as shown in one comment by a parent, 'my child is happy here and is eager to attend the pre-school'. The pre-school is well resourced and has a good 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:

- extend the quality of planning by consistently specifying what children are to learn and the intended learning outcomes
- improve the quality of assessment by ensuring that assessment records reflect the small steps of progress that children make towards their achievement of the early learning goals.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The capable leadership and management ensure that policies are well maintained and are strictly followed to ensure the care and education of the children. Safeguarding procedures are secure and risk assessments are carried out on a regular basis to protect the children. The premises are safe, with a controlled visitors' access and exit to ensure the safety of the children. Staff's access to good training programmes, alongside continuous support from the local authority's Early Years Service and the Primary Care Trust are driving improvement and promoting inclusion.

Partnerships with others are good. The pre-school's positive links with external agencies for specialist advice and support is improving the quality of the provision. The level of support and strategies for addressing the needs of all the children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities is very good. Additional links with the local library are helping the children to develop an interest in reading and developing valuable future life skills.

Self-evaluation is good. Leaders have accurately highlighted the need for improving the quality of planning and assessment systems to highlight what each child should learn next as the setting's main priority for facilitating further improvement. Staff work well as a team and take collective responsibility for the care and education of the children. The setting is well resourced and makes effective use of available equipment to promote children's learning opportunities. Children use the outdoor environment for physical play activities. However, the lack of any covered outdoor play area limits children's outdoor play opportunities during inclement weather conditions.

Partnerships with parents are good. The pre-school maintains positive links with parents who provide helpful background information, which assists staff in planning for the care and education of the children. Parents' active participation in running the pre-school enables the children to settle well into the pre-school's well-thought-out routines.

Leaders have effectively addressed the issues identified during the previous inspection. For example, children now have improved opportunities to mark-make and write for a variety of purposes, which are developing their early writing skills.

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

The pre-school provides a wide range of interesting activities which stimulate the children's interest and provide good learning opportunities. For example, children engage in outdoor gardening activities during which they plant vegetables, such as runner beans and lettuces. They particularly enjoy role play activities during which they recreate their daily experiences. Staff's positive interaction with children during these lively sessions makes learning fun and enhances the children's

imaginative use of language.

Fun dressing-up sessions based around animal characters, such as a tiger, delight the children. Well-established routines during which children explore colours, numbers and the current country of the week assist children's recall of weekly topics. Regular circle sessions to discuss their daily experiences are helping the children to develop speaking and listening skills. Singing sessions to re-enact number and action songs are assisting them to explore simple number operations. Staff's consistent behaviour management of the children, along with positive reinforcement systems, are helping children to behave well and care for each other. Subsequently, behaviour is good. Children enjoy each other's company and cooperate well during tasks, such as group construction games and messy play activities.

There are good opportunities for the children to use the computer for game sessions, which develops their technological skills. Story sessions are fun, with children listening with interest. The comfortable reading area is used well by the children to sit and look at books. Subsequently, children are making good progress towards the achievement of the early learning goals. Snack times are enjoyable social events, with children demonstrating increasing levels of independence in making their own choices by serving themselves. They are able to choose what they want to eat from a good range of healthy snacks, which includes a selection of fresh fruit.

Planning is improving, although it currently lacks sufficient detail of what children are to learn and the intended learning outcomes. Staff make observation notes of children during activities and maintain records of their work which reflect their progress. However, there are some gaps in the recording of the little steps of progress children make towards achievement of the early learning goals. All children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities are included in the range of activities. Food tasting sessions based around cuisines from other areas of the world, such as Asia, are developing children's awareness of other cultures. Regular walking trips to the immediate locality and visits to the library are developing children's awareness of the benefits of an active lifestyle. They have valuable opportunities to positively contribute to their daily routines through making a selection of their favourite activities. Purposeful discussions about the importance of keeping safe during trips are developing children's good awareness of safety. Children demonstrate increasing safety awareness in their sensible use of a range of climbing, balancing and riding equipment. Staff supervise children well during these activities, which promotes their safety and well-being. Children have continuous access to drinking water and are provided with a healthy selection of fruit and water during snack times, which promotes their health well.

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	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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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