

The Playpen

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector

Lisa Paisley

Setting address

North Crescent School, North Crescent, WICKFORD, Essex,
SS12 9AP

Telephone number

07821 195388

Email

carolinewheeler@live.co.uk

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

The Playpen Pre-school originally opened in 1997 and relocated to its current site in 2010. The setting operates from purpose built premises and it is situated in the grounds of North Crescent School in Wickford, Essex. A maximum of 22 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open each week day from 9.15am to 12.15pm Monday to Friday and Monday afternoons 12.35pm to 3.35pm. A lunch club is run on Mondays and Tuesdays 12.15am to 12.45pm. All children share access to a large secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 42 children aged from two to five years on roll. Children aged three and four years receive funding for early education. The pre-school serves the local community and wider areas. The setting supports a small number of children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and whom have English as an additional language.

The provision is registered by Ofsted on the Early Years Register.

The pre-school employs six members of staff, at least half the staff team, including the managers, hold appropriate early years qualifications. The pre-school receives support from the local authority.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children in the early years age range are making good progress in all areas their development as staff have a good understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Staff are experienced and skilled in their role and they have a good understanding of child development. Strong aspects of the setting include children's personal, emotional and social skills and communication, literacy and language development. Partnership work with parents and outside agencies is good as effective systems are in place. Self-evaluation is beginning to be developed, however, it is not yet fully embedded to ensure continuous improvements are sustained.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- develop self-evaluation systems to ensure continuous improvements are sustained.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

All required documentation is in place and is effectively maintained for the secure management of the pre-school. Policies and procedures are comprehensive and they reflect staff's current working practices. Recruitment and vetting procedures are robust, ensuring that all individuals working at the setting are suitable to do so. Children are effectively safeguarded as staff have a good understanding of their role in protecting children. Yearly risk assessments are in place and staff continuously monitor the environment ensuring any potential risks to children are minimised. Children and staff practise fire evacuation procedures and all fire equipment is in place and well maintained to further safeguard children. Good systems are in place for the checking and maintenance of equipment and resources, further minimising risks to children.

The setting is a positive play and learning environment as all resources and activities are organised effectively to meet the needs of the children and there is a good selection of resources and equipment across the six areas of learning. Staff ensure all children's art work is displayed and resources are organised to allow children to access them safely with independence. Teamwork is good as all staff have a clear understanding of their role and they clearly enjoy and value working with young children. Staff have additional responsibilities, such as Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) and Safeguarding Officer, and they are effective and experienced in their roles. All staff including the managers work hard to maintain good standards of care and provide a positive play and learning environment, this includes accessing training and developing the garden area. However, self-evaluation systems are not yet fully embedded to ensure improvements are sustained.

Partnership work with parents is good, as staff work hard at developing good relationships with parents. They listen to parents' views and contributions and always support families in meeting children's needs. A good range of information is exchanged on a regular basis, including newsletters and verbal communication and regular parents' evenings this ensures that ongoing communication is good and consistent. Parent's complimentary comments include children being happy and making good progress and staff being experienced and effective in their role. The pre-school has established successful relationships with the local schools and other agencies delivering the Early Years Foundation Stage.

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

Planning, observations and assessment arrangements have been successfully implemented within the setting as staff have worked hard in developing the learning and development requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Planning and assessment arrangements are cyclical and staff undertake regular observations of the children and this information informs future activity plans. This

ensures that activity plans are closely tailored towards children's individual needs and interests. Children's individual profiles provide parents with a rich textual narrative of their child's progress. Overall, children are making good progress towards the early learning goals given their capabilities and starting points. There is a good range of resources, posters and play equipment that reflects cultural diversity. Children learn about the wider world through daily routines and planned activities including The World Cup, Children In Need, Holi and Christmas.

Children are happy, confident and settled as staff warmly welcome the children, consequently they are eager to participate, for example, posting Christmas cards on arrival. Children are provided with a good balance of child-spontaneous play and adult-initiated activities which successfully capture children's interests and imaginations. As a result, children are enthusiastic, inquisitive and curious about their learning and they enjoy participating in the range of activities provided. Staff are purposeful in their interactions with the children and are attentive in listening to them, ensuring children are fully included within the setting. Consequently, staff have a very good understanding of children's individual needs and personalities. Children's behaviour is good as staff successfully create an environment that values positive behaviour. They form close friendships with their peers and they are co-operative with their friends as they share and take turns in their play. Positive contribution is promoted as staff effectively praise and encourage children throughout the day.

All children are making good progress in their language and communication skills as the staff successfully create a language rich environment that encourages children's self-expression, mark making and imagination. For example, self-registration for snacks and the role play. The book corner is warm and welcoming for children and there is a good selection of story and information books offering both instruction and delight for all children. They particularly enjoy listening to witty books and singing Christmas songs. The garden offers an exciting play area for children, and this has been beneficial for the children who enjoy physical exercise and energetic play. Children enjoyed playing in the snow, running up and down the small hill and dipping their fingers in the icy water. All children learn about the natural world through planned topic work as 'Our Butterfly Story', the planting of spring bulbs and trips to the eco centre.

Children's health and safety is promoted well by the staff as they ensure that they know about their own personal hygiene and how to be safe within the environment. They practise regular fire drills with the staff and children are continually reminded how to be safe and why, for example, using play equipment and walking around the indoor play space. Staff also ensure children wear appropriate outdoor clothing for outside play during the winter months. Snacks are healthy, and warm snacks such as, spaghetti are provided during the colder weather. Children have access to fresh drinking water to ensure that they remain hydrated at all times. Good systems are in place to support children with dietary needs; this includes obtaining all the information and writing care plans. Overall, their health and well-being is effectively promoted.

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

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	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

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	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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