

# Harwich Centre Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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**Unique reference number** EY272636  
**Inspection date** 09/05/2011  
**Inspector** Sarah Williams

**Setting address** Adult Community College, Main Road, Harwich, Essex,  
CO12 4AH

**Telephone number** 01255 556208

**Email**

**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

Harwich Centre Pre-school opened in 1980 and operates from two rooms within the Tendring Adult Community College in Dovercourt. Children have access to a secure, enclosed outside play area. The setting is registered by Ofsted on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register.

A maximum of 37 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The group is open each weekday from 9am to 12noon and offers afternoon sessions to older children from 12.30pm to 3.30pm. There are currently 92 children aged from two to under five years on roll.

The nursery employs 13 members of staff all of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications.

## The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children benefit from attending this established setting where their welfare, learning and development needs are well met. Staff are very supportive of the children and recognise them as unique individuals. Activities are planned using the Early Years Foundation Stage framework, facilitating children's learning by offering them a wide and stimulating range of exploratory, first hand experiences. The setting has close links with the local school, aiding transition for children and works effectively in partnership with other support agencies. A self-evaluation provides staff with an opportunity to review the provision and plan future action designed to raise standards and bring improvements to outcomes for children.

## What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- ensure that policies and procedures contain all necessary elements to protect and support children's welfare and make sure that staff and parents are aware of the content of essential policies, such as, safeguarding and equal opportunities
- ensure all staff are encouraged to participate in planning, particularly short term planning and that they understand how to deliver and evaluate activities to complete the planning cycle
- set in place systems to share important information between other early years settings attended by children.

## **The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision**

Children are safeguarded as the setting has effective written policies and procedures in place. Staff regularly update their safeguarding knowledge through appropriate training and workshops. However, at the time of inspection, local contact details were not readily accessible and parents were not consistently advised of the setting's approach to safeguarding.

Staff are appropriately vetted to ensure their suitability to work with children; proof of clearance is held on file and easily accessible for inspection. Thorough risk assessments ensure that the premises, both indoors and outdoors, remain safe and secure for children at all times. Staff generally work well as a team to ensure the smooth running of sessions, however, not all staff are secure in understanding how the short term planning is used, or have input into this, potentially missing some opportunities to challenge children. An effective self-evaluation process ensures that the setting is reflective and continuously strives for improvement by reviewing and evaluating working practices. Parents and children participate in this process by completing questionnaires and daily informal chats. The results are used to inform future planning and make positive changes to the operation of the group.

Children in both rooms have access to a stimulating range of toys and activities on low level surfaces and on floor mats. Children confidently select from the resources, guiding their own play and using the equipment to suit their needs, for example, two girls enjoy a chat on their mobile phones as they sit on the small sofa with dolls and shopping bags. A high adult to child ratio ensures that staff are on hand to support the children at all times. The sessions include either free flow play, for the older children, or sessions of outdoor play for the younger ones. This ensures that children experience a wide range of learning opportunities and make full use of the premises and equipment. Staff demonstrate a commitment to keeping abreast of changes and development within the childcare world. They attend regular workshops and in-house training as well as outside courses, cascading and sharing their new found knowledge with colleagues at team meetings. All children are included as staff have a clear ethos and policy on equality and diversity. Staff know the children and their families, and the local community, well and use this knowledge to meet children's needs by tailoring activities, working practices and means of communication to each individual family's requirements.

The setting has a good working relationship with the local school, which is on adjacent premises, aiding transition for children. Currently, the systems for sharing information for children attending other early years settings are not in place. When required, staff actively seek support and guidance from other professionals to enhance children's welfare. Parents spoken to at the time of the inspection were very positive, appreciating the approachability and friendliness of the staff. They state that they feel involved in their children's learning and have good opportunities to discuss their children's progress with key persons on a regular

basis. Recent changes have invited parents to actively contribute comments and suggestions to the children's 'special books'.

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

Children enjoy their time at the setting. They are actively engaged in stimulating and fun play opportunities which enable them to develop independence and become active learners. They enthusiastically self-select toys and play materials when playing indoors and outside. Children enjoy making a tall tower from large blocks, discussing how tall it is and which block they need to use next. They plant vegetables and flowers and use tools and carry water, gaining an understanding of life cycles and how to care for living things. Staff support these first hand experiences by asking appropriate open-ended questions and giving children time to respond. Observations are supported with photographic evidence and used to inform future planning and next steps in learning for individual children.

Children are very safe and secure within the provision due to the clear and effective procedures for risk assessing the premises, outdoor area and outings. They eat healthy and nutritious snacks including fruit and vegetables and are actively involved in the preparation of snack time by cutting fruit, under supervision. Children choose when to eat their snack around the rolling snack table and make clear choices about what they eat and drink from the range of healthy options. Children develop an understanding of why they should wash their hands at different times, such as before eating and after using the toilet, helping to keep them healthy and prevent the risk of spread of infection.

Children are happy and settled within the setting. They move about with confidence and approach staff with ease. Staff freely offer praise and encouragement and sensitively remind children of behaviour and safety rules if they forget them. Children participate in community events, broadening their understanding of the world around them and others' needs and feelings. They develop knowledge of world cultures and religions as they participate in the celebration of festivals and special occasions, such as Chinese New Year. The range of planned and freely-chosen activities enables children to develop skills as future learners. They communicate well and share their thoughts and feelings with each other and with adults. They develop skills for problem solving by experimenting with materials and play equipment in the course of play and daily routines. Children's work is used effectively to create displays and maintain a pleasing visual ambience in the playrooms, whilst boosting self-esteem as they see their work valued.

## 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

<b>How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?</b>	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	2

### The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	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	3
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	2
The effectiveness of partnerships	3
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

<b>Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	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