

Tollesbury Preschool

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	402290
Inspection date	16/06/2011
Inspector	Lynn A Hartigan

Setting address	The Manse, 2 Station Road, Tollesbury, Maldon, Essex, CM9 8RA
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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

Tollesbury Pre-School has been registered since 1967. It is a registered Community Interest Company and run by a manager. The pre-school operates from the Old Manse in Tollesbury, Essex. There is an enclosed garden available for outdoor play.

The pre-school is registered to care for 19 children at any one time, aged between two and five years. There are currently 38 children on roll. The pre-school opens each weekday from 9am until 11.30am and 1pm until 3.30pm during school term times. The provision is registered on the Early Years Register and also the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. There are strategies in place to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children learning English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs six members of staff, including the manager, of whom all have appropriate early years qualifications.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children's welfare, learning and development are supported well as they experience good levels of care and attention from staff, this enables them to make good progress during their time at pre-school. Children appear comfortable and secure within the pre-school environment and enjoy a wide variety of activities which include some opportunities to learn and embrace differences and similarities. Overall, toys and resources provided both indoors and outdoors are interesting, appealing and easily accessible. Good partnership working with parents has been established and parent's contributions are valued by staff, however, information for parents such as policies and procedures are not reviewed regularly. Staff are beginning to develop some links with other early years settings children attend. An effective and systematic process to monitor and evaluate the provision continues to develop to ensure the outcomes for children are continually improved.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- develop further a culture of reflective practice, self-evaluation and informed discussion to involve all staff, parents and children in identifying the setting's strengths and priorities for development that will improve the quality of provision and outcomes for children
- develop further partnership working to provide more opportunities for parents to share in their children's learning
- ensure policies and procedures are regularly reviewed and updated and are easily accessible for parents.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children's welfare is protected as staff have a good understanding of child protection and safeguarding. Established procedures are in place to ensure children are cared for by suitably vetted staff that have completed all required checks and an induction programme. Staff refresh their knowledge and understanding with regard to safeguarding issues as they attend training courses. A safeguarding policy and procedure that has recently been reviewed and written risk assessments ensure children are able to play in a safe and secure environment.

Management of staff ensures good ratios are maintained, therefore, children are supervised well. Staff have created a homely, bright and fun place for children to learn and develop. Walls are displayed with the children's beautiful artwork and some of the good quality resources are easily accessible, enabling the children to self-select and initiate their own play. Posters and photographs of the children at play are displayed and create a real sense of belonging.

Through discussion it is evident that the manager and her staff are committed to and understand the importance of continued improvement. However, a systematic procedure to include all staff, parents and children's comments is still developing. A written self-evaluation is in place but does not highlight the improved outcomes for children. Staff training identified through appraisals, encouraged and supported to ensure staff have the opportunity to build on their existing knowledge and further their qualifications.

Parents are warmly welcomed in to the setting by staff that are friendly and approachable and happily discuss the children on a daily basis. Regular newsletters and a parent's notice board ensure parents are offered some information. Some systems are in place to enable parents to contribute to their children's learning, however, these are not regularly reviewed to ensure they are effective. Verbal references from parents are positive and suggest that they are happy with the care their children receive.

The manager and her staff show a commitment to develop further relationships and links with local schools and nurseries. Some good links are already in place with other settings delivering the Early Years Foundation Stage. For example, pre-school children are invited to attend story time and plays at the local primary and visits from the early years teacher are arranged. As a result, information is shared and continuity of care across different provision children attend is improved and transition in to school is supported effectively.

Staff are skilful in identifying children who may require additional help and have good strategies in place to share information with the parents and other agencies involved with the family. Good strategies are in place to support children who learn English as an additional language. Regular communication with the parents, the introduction of Makaton, signs and visual prompts throughout the pre-school ensure the outcomes for all children are good.

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

An established staff team provide consistency for the children. Staff demonstrate a good understanding and knowledge of how children learn and develop and very intuitive of the children in their care. Children's development and learning is promoted to a good standard, as a result. Some good systems have been established for communication with parents and carers and overall some good information regarding each child's unique backgrounds is in place to ensure their individual needs are effectively supported.

Good observations are recorded within the children's learning journey records. The children's next steps of learning are identified and used to inform the planning. This ensures each child is sufficiently challenged. The use of photographs within the children's records provides parents with good evidence of their development and a treasured keepsake when they leave. Some opportunities are in place to encourage parents to support their children's development and contribute to the initial assessment, although these are informal and have not been reviewed to ensure they are effective. Children are encouraged to initiate their own play and learning and this is successfully supported by the staff. For example, children become engrossed in their imaginary games. They are able to access dressing up and props to extend their play and staff are on hand to support them. Children have great fun outdoors and enjoy their time in the garden. The six areas of learning are supported well in the outdoor environment which is used all year round. Children have fun growing lettuce carrots and sunflowers. They plot their growth using tape measures and are able to compare size. They become excited when it rains and run indoors telling the staff how it feels on their bodies. Children make early attempts at mark making outdoors as they paint with water on the walls, use clipboards and make large posters painting with their hands and feet. They develop their physical skills and sense of space as they steer their bikes balance on stilts and throw balls.

Cosy book areas are used well. Children relish story time and happily sit with staff who read stories on request. A good selection of books are readily available to the children. Children are beginning to understand that text has meaning and different text and Makaton signs are displayed throughout the pre-school. Children are beginning to understand simple mathematics. For example, they use bears in a sorting games and are familiar with the number lines and sequences displayed around the setting. They enjoy singing favourite number songs and are beginning to understand the value of money as they purchase fruit and vegetables from the village greengrocer for their snacks. These opportunities successfully re-enforce children's understanding of mathematics.

Children enjoy creative activities and their artwork is very good. Beautiful pictures of the children's own work are displayed. They paint zoo animals following discussion about visiting the zoo and self portraits. Opportunities for children to express their creativity are good. They use dough, compost, musical instruments and puppets. Children are able to use everyday technology such as a computer,

mobile phones and calculators.

Staff listen with interest to the children who have formed close attachments. Staff are good role models and this promotes positive behaviour. For example, children are praised for cooperating at tidy up time. They work well together and have formed secure friendships. For example, children ask one another if they would like help and negotiate tidying together. As a result, children's behaviour is very good.

Diversity is reflected in some areas of the pre-school and some good resources are readily available. Posters depicting positive images prompt conversation and children are beginning to understand about the wider world through topic work and celebrations acknowledged within the planning. For example, children have great fun celebrating the Pearly King and Queen Harvest, Chinese New Year where children taste and play with noodles and Christmas. Each child's unique background is embraced and children learning English as an additional language are supported well. For example, visual time lines and Makaton signs assist all children in communication.

Through daily routines and topic work children are beginning to understand the importance of how to stay safe. For example, when walking in the environment road safety is introduced and discussed. Organised visits to the pre-school from the local police and paramedic supports discussion with regard to personal safety and what happens in an emergency situation. Children regularly participate in fire evacuation drills and are familiar with the routine.

Children benefit from healthy snacks such as, a choice of savoury crackers and cheese. A good selection of fruits are also available. Their independence is encouraged as the introduction of a buffet style snack bar supports this and has proved very successful. Children skilfully pour their own drinks and butter their crackers. Children have a good understanding of how to stay healthy. For example, they take themselves to the bathroom and understand the importance of washing hands after using the toilet and before snack.

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	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	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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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