

The Tops Foundation Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	204101
Inspection date	04/11/2011
Inspector	Clair Stockings

Setting address	The Community Centre, Salcott Crescent, Wick Meadows Estate, Wickford, Essex, SS12 9NR
Telephone number	01268 766218
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Type of setting	Childcare - Non-Domestic

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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

The Tops Foundation Pre-School was registered in 1997. It operates from a community centre on Wick Meadows Estate in Wickford. A maximum of 26 children in the early years age group, of whom none may be under two years, may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is registered on the Early Years Register and on both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register.

The pre-school is open each weekday from 9am to 11.30am and from 12 noon to 2.30pm, during term time. There are currently 77 children aged from two to five years on roll. The pre-school is funded to provide free early education to children aged three and four years. The pre-school currently supports one child who speaks English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs 12 members of staff, 11 of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

The pre-school offers an exceptionally welcoming and inclusive environment for children. Its robust procedures and efficient systems are extremely effective in promoting children's welfare, learning and development. Overall, children thrive through a planned range of stimulating and exciting play experiences in both the indoor and outdoor environments. The partnerships with parents and external agencies are a key strength of this pre-school and ensure that all children receive care in line with their individual needs. The manager is extremely proactive in driving improvement. Staff continually evaluate their practice and maximise opportunities to further improve the outcomes for all children.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the high quality early years provision the registered person should consider:

- extending planning to include the outdoor space to further enhance children's outdoor play experiences.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children are safeguarded and well protected in the pre-school as staff are extremely vigilant and have an excellent understanding of local safeguarding procedures. Children in the pre-school are cared for by suitable adults through the robust staff recruitment and vetting procedures in place. Staff make very effective

use of detailed and thorough risk assessments to support them in checking that the areas used by the children are safe. This means that children are able to move safely and freely around the building. The environment is well organised and accessible with a plentiful range of high quality resources and enables children to play in areas of independent choice both indoors and outdoors. Supported by the inspiring staff, children thrive and make excellent progress. Staff are highly knowledgeable of the Early Years Foundation Stage and use this extremely well to extend the children's learning.

The manager and staff team contribute to the pre-school's highly reflective self-evaluation. This takes account of all aspects of the provision, identifying strengths, together with areas needing further development in order to enhance the environment. Together, they share high expectations and set high standards which are embedded across all areas of practice. The views of parents and children are gathered and considered through the use of questionnaires and regular consultation. All recommendations from the last inspection, for example, development of assessment and planning to improve learning outcomes for children, have been thoroughly and successfully addressed.

The pre-school actively promotes inclusion by welcoming all families, helping new children to settle quickly and offering additional support where appropriate. Staff are highly effective in enabling all children to be well integrated and the development of all in relation to their starting points is excellent. Staff are very successful in taking steps to close identified gaps in children's achievements, consequently, the outcomes for children and their experiences are extremely positive. The pre-school forms very close working relationships with parents and carers. Parents speak glowingly of the staff and all they do for the children. A free flow of shared information means that parents, carers and staff are all kept extremely well informed about every aspect of children's achievement, well-being and development. This means that parents and carers can become involved in their child's learning and each child is well supported in making excellent progress towards the early learning goals. Relationships with other professionals and external agencies involved with the children are well established and highly effective, contributing strongly to supporting children's welfare and learning.

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

Children thrive in the homely and high quality learning environment. The children are extremely well settled and they thoroughly enjoy in taking part in a varied range of worthwhile and stimulating activities both indoors and outdoors. While playing outdoors, children delight in the appearance of a rainbow and staff skillfully use this opportunity to extend children's learning through discussion.

Staff undertake systematic and spontaneous observations that very effectively inform both individual and group planning. This means they are able to successfully meet children's individual needs and interests through a significant range of experiences. Staff have extensive knowledge of their key children and can

talk in detail about what they can do and how they plan to move them on to their next identified stage of development.

Thorough assessment records are in place within the children's developmental profiles. These records clearly identify children's starting points and future learning, illustrated by a wealth of photographic evidence. The intuitive ability of staff to positively engage in everything children say and do enables children to feel valued. This further encourages children to become highly inquisitive and active learners.

Children successfully develop their spoken language through interaction, conversation and answering appropriate questions posed by staff. Children develop excellent understanding that text carries meaning through the highly effective use of books, labels and signs. They have ample opportunities to successfully develop their creative skills through an abundance of materials, for example, paints, crayons and pencils. Children have impressive access to information and communication technology, for example, through use of children's digital cameras, remote control cars and a computer. This contributes highly effectively in helping children acquire and apply appropriate skills for their future lives. Children develop their numeracy skills through a rich range of practical activities, for example, at snack time they independently count out and distribute the corresponding number of cups required for the children present. Regular walks beyond the pre-school provide highly stimulating opportunities for the children to identify and learn about different features of the local community.

Children develop an excellent understanding of healthy lifestyles. They benefit from regular fresh air and exercise during daily outdoor play. Healthy and nutritious snacks which include fruit and vegetables are provided. Staff organise snack time to provide an opportunity for children to develop excellent independence skills by helping to serve their own snack and pour their own drinks. Children have access to fresh drinking water which they can independently help themselves to when they are thirsty. This helps children to develop an awareness of their own bodily needs. Children are developing a highly impressive understanding of the importance of personal hygiene through the embedded practice of the staff team who actively encourage them to wash their hands before eating and after using the toilet.

Children's emotional well-being is exceptionally well nurtured by the warm and purposeful interaction of the staff who are effectively deployed throughout the pre-school. They clearly apply consistent boundaries so that children develop excellent knowledge of what is expected and consequently display exemplary behaviour. Children play co-operatively, taking turns, demonstrating respect and concern for each other. They display a sense of belonging to the pre-school as, supported enthusiastically by staff, they help to tidy away at the end of the session. Children are very confident and competent in communicating their thoughts and show a mature response to taking responsibility for their own and others' safety. This is impressively demonstrated during outdoor play when they listen and adhere closely to the instructions of staff. Children learn about safety through regular fire evacuation practice. In addition, children safely use a range of challenging utensils and resources supported by exceedingly attentive staff.

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?	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	1

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	1
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding	1
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	1
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	1
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	1
The extent to which children feel safe	1
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	1
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	1

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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
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The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are:	Met
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