

Tadpoles Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector	Sue Mann

Setting address	Marks Tey Parish Hall, Old London Road, Marks Tey, Colchester, Essex, CO6 1EH
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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

Tadpoles Pre-School was established in 1997. It operates from the parish hall in Marks Tey, on the outskirts of Colchester. The pre-school has access to a large outside space, which is part of the parish hall grounds. The playgroup opens each weekday morning from 9.20am to 12.20pm, a lunch club is also offered from 12.20pm to 12.50pm. Sessions run during school term time only. The pre-school is run by a committee by parents of attending children, some whom help out in the pre-school.

The provision is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory part of the Childcare Register to care for 48 children. There are currently 27 children aged from two to five years on roll, attending for a variety of sessions. The playgroup supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Six members of staff hold early years qualifications at level 2 or above and three hold level 1 qualifications. The pre-school provides funded early education for three- and four-year-old children.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children at the pre-school make good progress in all areas of their learning and development as staff have a good understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage. This promotes good outcomes for the children. The pre-school has an inclusive approach and provides effective support for children with disabilities. Children benefit from the good working relationship between the staff, parents and carers. There are good systems in place to monitor the children's progress towards the early learning goals with a robust system of observing, assessing and planning for the children's development. Overall, systems are in place to ensure the safety of the children; however, some procedures are inconsistent which could impact on the safety of the children.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To meet the specific requirements of the EYFS, the registered person must:

- maintain a record of aspects of the environment that need to be checked on a regular basis, and when and by whom they have been checked. 20/10/2011

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

- maintain a written record of fire evacuation drills.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The setting has appropriate written safeguarding policies. All staff have a strong knowledge of safeguarding issues. Systems for recruiting new staff are robust and ensure that all new staff have the necessary checks in place to be contact with the children. The current staff team have worked together for many years and staff turnover is low. Risk assessments are in place; however, there is no written record of regular checks to ensure that all the areas the children use are safe. This affects the safety of the children as the halls are used for a variety of purposes not just the pre-school.

The pre-school's procedure for emergency evacuation of the premises has not been carried out for some months. This affects the ability of the staff to keep children safe in an emergency. Staff monitor the children leaving the pre-school to ensure all children are released into the care of known adults and carers. Parents are requested to inform the setting in writing if an adult unknown to the pre-school collects a child. This ensures the children are safe and protected when leaving the pre-school. At present, the outdoor area is not fully secure, children know the boundaries they need to keep within when using the outdoor area, and effective supervision means they remain within the boundaries. The staff and committee have worked hard to gain consent for the pre-school to put down a play surface and to erect temporary fencing when the pre-school is open. This demonstrates the capacity and ambition of the staff to improve the safety for the children when playing outside.

The children benefit from a wide variety of resources, which are laid out on mats and tables, allowing children to move easily between activities. Children are encouraged to ask for alternative resources, promoting child-initiated activities

The pre-school has become involved with various schemes to ensure it remains sustainable. It has good support from parents, who help fundraise and also get involved in the pre-school, providing further opportunities for the children's learning. One parent who is a policeman brought in a set of antlers for the children to explore, developing their knowledge and understanding of the world. Parents are appreciative of the staff's communication with them and feel that they are fully informed of their children's progress towards the early learning goals..

The pre-school has a fully inclusive approach to meeting the needs of all the children, supporting those with medical needs and those who have been identified as gifted and talented. The staff have good links with the primary schools to which the children move, which ensures a smooth transition into full-time education. The staff also have good links with other professionals, such as the area Special Educational Needs Coordinator, who visits termly. There is a detailed self-evaluation process to which all staff contribute at regular staff meetings.

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

A well-planned settling-in process ensures that the transition into pre-school is smooth, and staff encourage parents to stay as long as needed to settle their children in. Time invested when each new child starts ensures that the staff are fully aware of the children's needs and stages of development. Systems for assessing children's learning and development are effective, with the children making good progress towards the early learning goals. Each child is allocated a key worker who observes the children daily. This then feeds into planning to ensure each child's individual needs are met. Staff meetings ensure all staff are fully committed to meeting each child's needs, which ensures the children make good progress. Clear learning journals are shared with parents at the parent's request, verbal feedback is given by staff at the end of the session. Children in the pre-school are encouraged to be independent, washing their hands before selecting their own snacks from the snack bar. A range of healthy snacks is on offer along with a choice of water or milk to drink. Some children bring in their own drinks to have at snack time.

Children's progress towards the early learning goals is enhanced through the broad range of resources on offer. These are regularly rotated to give the children a variety of experiences. They are able to explore music and sound through the current music theme that promotes their communication, language and literacy skills as well as their awareness of how different instruments produce differing sounds. Children develop good creative skills as they model with dough and make shakers using rice and yogurt pots. They use problem-solving skills as they complete puzzles. Children also have the opportunity to make marks using appropriate resources, including pencils and paper.

Children benefit from moving freely between the indoor and outside area, which provides opportunities to develop their physical skills. The adjacent play park and skate park help children develop gross motor skills. Children take part in walks around the park to look at the changing seasons, this develops their knowledge and understanding of the world. Counting to 10 in English, French and German during circle time helps the children develop their numeracy skills and an awareness of other languages. Children's awareness of cultural diversity is further enhanced through the celebration of festivals. These are promoted through the use of books and planned activities such as food-tasting at snack time. Children respond well to their peers, and chat together while playing and at snack. They behave well in the setting, responding to prompts to tidy up or sit on the mat for story time, the staff sensitively intervene where appropriate, using gentle reminders.

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	3
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	3
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