

Maple Leaf Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspection date

14/03/2012

Inspector

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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

Maple Leaf Pre-School has been registered for approximately eighteen years and is managed by an elected committee. It operates from premises on a military base. There is a pre-school room for the older children and a crche room for the under three-year-olds. The setting has direct access to a fully enclosed and secure outdoor area.

The setting is registered for 30 children. Of these, no more than six may be under two years-of-age. It is registered on the Early Years Register and both the compulsory and voluntary part of the Childcare Register. There are currently 36 children on roll aged from one to under five years. This includes 18 who receive funding for nursery education. The group currently supports a number of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The group is open five days a week during school term times. Pre-school sessions are from 9.10am until 12.10pm. The crche sessions are from 9.30am until 12.00 noon. Five permanent staff work with the children. Of these, all have early years qualifications. Two relief members of staff provide cover when needed and one of these is currently undertaking a National Vocational Qualification at level 3. The setting receives support from the local authority and works closely with the local school.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children and parents are warmly greeted at the start of the session. Children arrive happy and are confident to leave their parents. Partnerships are firmly established and contribute positively to children's wellbeing. Resources are used well to meet children's needs, although outdoors is a little less well developed. Improvements have been made to observation and assessment systems and are mostly effective in showing children's progress. Self- evaluation is reflective and well targeted to drive ongoing improvements.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- improve the opportunities for children to play and learn in the outdoor environment
- demonstrate more clearly in assessment records where children's identified next steps are taking place.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children's welfare is safeguarded by vigilant and knowledgeable staff. Thorough employment and vetting procedures are undertaken to monitor staff suitability, with an induction programme and appraisals to monitor ongoing suitability. Detailed risk assessments, daily checklists and regular fire practises maintain high standards of safety. Staff have a clear knowledge of their child protection duties and the procedure to follow if they have concerns. All have completed safeguarding training and refresh their knowledge regularly through staff meetings and online courses.

Staff work well as a team and provide children with a stimulating environment, which covers all areas of learning effectively. Some staff have designated roles such as safeguarding, health and safety and Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator, which they have been appropriately trained for. Staff act as good role models and raise children's self-esteem and sense of belonging through lots of encouragement and praise. They have a good understanding of the Early years Foundation Stage and how young children learn. Staff provide a fully inclusive environment for all children and promote equality and diversity well. Children are encouraged to respect each other and they develop a good understanding of differences. For example, through well planned activities, positive resources and displays, and purposeful discussions. The pre-school has successful systems in place for monitoring and evaluating the quality of the provision and to promote continuous improvements for all children. This includes a reflective self-assessment and well-targeted development plan, which includes the views of staff, parents and children.

Documentation is comprehensively maintained and organised well to ensure that all requirements are met and parents and staff are well informed. The recommendations raised at the last inspection have been met well and have improved the outcomes for children. Many additional improvements have been made in recent months since a new manager was appointed. The improved monitoring system she has introduced enables clearer reflection and the identification of areas in need of developing. This has improved the learning opportunities for children and has raised staff morale.

Staff have established strong partnerships with parents and others involved in children's care and learning. Comprehensive information is exchanged between staff and parents about children's needs and achievements. Successful links are established with other settings and professionals to ensure that children have consistent support in their learning and development. The Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator and key persons link effectively with parents and external professionals to ensure children's additional needs are met well. In addition, regular meetings and visits are organised with the local school that children attend to aid their transition.

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

Children enjoy a wide range of experiences to support all areas of learning well. Resources are easily accessible and set out with thought so that children can self-select and contribute well to making decisions. There is a good balance of adult-led activities and free play indoors although best use is not currently made of the outdoor area. Funding has been secured to improve this and clear plans are in place to improve the outdoor resources so that children benefit. Staff use their knowledge well to promote children's learning and development and fully recognise each child as a unique individual. The observation and assessment system for children's learning has recently been changed and is effective in showing how all areas of learning are covered and the next steps each child is working towards. However, it is not clear from these assessments how these next steps have been achieved. This is due to the newness of the system and its ongoing development. Staff all have a very good knowledge of the children's needs and abilities and provide them with well-targeted support and challenge. This includes children with additional needs who have individual educational plans, which all staff are fully aware of.

This is a happy environment where children show a strong sense of well-being. They are independent, confident and articulate communicators. They focus well on activities that capture their imaginations and staff respond well to this by extending their experiences. For example, staff noticed a child was fascinated by a small voice recorder that was in the science basket. They decided to incorporate this in their key-group-time and share the child's experiences with the rest of the children. Staff collected a range of animals in a basket and each child, in turn, chose an animal and made the sound into the recorder, which staff played back to them. This made the children laugh a lot and also helped shy children to join in more easily. Children have good opportunities to mark-make and to access a wide range of books, which are displayed throughout the pre-school. They develop competent skills on the computer and can use the mouse with precision to click and drag. Children have a good understanding of numbers and use these well in context. Staff enable children to problem solve and use numbers and calculation in all situations. For example, helpers are chosen each day from a rota to assist at snack time. They work out how many plates, knives and cartons of milk they need at each table. Time is afforded to snack preparation as staff recognise the valuable learning that takes place, including raising children's self-esteem by enabling them to contribute. This is a print-rich environment where children have good exposure to letters, numerals, shapes and words. Examples of their work are displayed with care so that children take pride in their achievements.

Children demonstrate that they feel safe and secure in the pre-school through their self-confidence, developing attachments to key staff and their desire to explore and investigate. Children learn about keeping safe through regular fire drills, visits from the police, learning about road safety when they go out and about and by having consistent safety rules throughout the session. Children behave very well and are polite, courteous and responsive to staff. They are developing a good

attitude to healthy lifestyles. They eat healthy snacks each day and they enjoy growing vegetables and learning about where food comes from and what food is good for them. Positive wall displays, books and activities consolidate their learning. Children follow good hygiene routines and have time to play outdoors during each session. In addition to this they go to the gym once per week to use the equipment and practise for their mini Olympics. Children develop a good understanding of the importance of exercise and keeping themselves healthy.

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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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