

Old Heath Community Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector Janet Keeling

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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

Old Heath Community Pre-School opened in 2002. It is run as a charitable limited company and managed by the trustees of the pre-School. It operates from a demountable building within the grounds of Old Heath Community Primary School in Colchester, Essex. Children have access to an enclosed, outdoor play area and to the school playground and playing fields. The pre-school serves children and families from the local and surrounding areas.

A maximum of 20 children from two years to under eight years may attend the pre-school at any one time. There are currently 52 children on roll, all of whom are within the early years age group. The pre-school opens Monday to Friday from 9am to 3pm. The pre-school operates during school term time only. Children attend for a variety of sessions.

The pre-school has procedures in place to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and is able to support children who speak English as an additional language. The pre-school is registered by Ofsted on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register.

There are six members of staff who work directly with the children. Of these, one holds a National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) at level 4, three hold NVQs at level 3 and two hold NVQs at level 2. The pre-school receives support from the local authority.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Staff have a good understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage framework and as a result, children make good progress in their learning. Practice is inclusive, supporting all children to actively participate in activities which meet their interests and developmental needs. Most policies and procedures are implemented effectively to safeguard and promote the children's well-being. Good partnerships with parents, the host school and other agencies have been established, ensuring children's individual needs are consistently met. The newly appointed manager, staff and the dedicated trustees have high aspirations to further develop this already good provision. Together they demonstrate a good commitment towards the sustained and continuous improvement of the pre-school, which is well placed to develop in the future.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- enhance the two way flow of information with parents so that their signatures are consistently gained on children's accident records

- develop further the process of self-evaluation in order to identify the pre-school's strengths and priorities for development that will improve the quality of the provision for all children.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Good priority is given to safeguarding and protecting children. All staff have a good understanding of safeguarding issues and are fully aware of the procedures to follow should they be concerned about a child in their care. Robust recruitment and vetting procedures are in place, ensuring children are cared for by suitable adults. Induction procedures for new staff, students and volunteers are also implemented effectively. All staff have a good understanding of health and safety issues, hold current first aid certificates and have good procedures in place should a child become ill while at pre-school. However, while accident records are completed staff do not consistently obtain parents' signatures in acknowledgement of a child's accident. Yearly risk assessments and daily safety checks are completed to ensure all potential hazards to children are minimised. Staff routinely verify the identity of all visitors and have robust procedures in place for the safe arrival and collection of children. The learning environment allows children to move freely and independently between the indoor and outdoor areas where resources are readily accessible to all children. Staff are deployed effectively to ensure that children are supervised safely at all times.

The newly appointed manager has enormous drive and commitment and since her appointment she has made positive improvements within the pre-school. Staff are dedicated, enthusiastic and work effectively as a team. They have a shared vision and a good commitment towards improving outcomes for children. Systems for monitoring the quality of the pre-school are in place, however, they do not fully identify the pre-school's strengths and areas for further development. The manager and trustees fully acknowledge the importance of self-evaluation and are motivated and focused on raising the quality of the provision. Staff provide a welcoming and inclusive environment where children are fully included and integrated into pre-school life. They fully recognise the importance of working in partnership with other early years professionals and have been proactive in establishing good links with teachers at the host school and with other agencies. Ongoing professional development of all staff is encouraged and staff hold good levels of qualifications and experience.

Partnerships with parents and carers are good. Parents are invited to visit the pre-school before their child starts and also receive a well-written prospectus which outlines the running of the pre-school. Effective settling-in procedures help support children in their transition from home into the pre-school environment. Children benefit from the positive relationships that have been established between their parents and staff. This is achieved through the informal exchange of information each day, the effective 'key person' system and through the use of home diaries. Parents also access information regarding the day-to-day running of the pre-school through the use of a parents' notice board, regular newsletters and access to policies and procedures. Parents value the work of the pre-school and expressed

positive views during the inspection and through feedback on questionnaires. Comments included, 'children are happy and settled', 'staff are approachable and friendly' and 'my child is excited about being at pre-school'.

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

Children happily enter this welcoming and child-friendly pre-school. They receive a very warm welcome from staff, settle quickly and eagerly engage in activities. They have good opportunities to make choices about their own learning and play as they freely access a wide range of stimulating activities and resources. Children benefit from the free flow system that operates between the indoor and outdoor learning environments. There is a good balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities that result in children being active learners. All children are valued and treated with equal concern with any specific requirements being met sensitively through discussion with parents and other professionals. Staff know the children very well. They observe and assess them as they play and use information gained to effectively guide planning in order to meet the needs, interests and abilities of individual children. All children have learning folders which contain photographic and written information of their learning and achievements, together with evidence of their own work. These folders are available for parents to see at any time.

Children make good progress towards the early learning goals as they engage in an interesting and stimulating range of activities. For example, there is enormous excitement as the children engage in an Easter egg hunt in the garden. They listen carefully to instruction and follow the Easter bunny arrows. Children laugh and chuckle with delight as they find the chocolate bunnies. They enjoy exploring sound using musical instruments, singing and action rhymes. Indoors, there is great enthusiasm as children tunefully sing 'Twinkle Twinkle Little Star' and 'Down in the Jungle'. Their creativity is supported well through a range of accessible resources such as, construction toys, role play equipment and access to a range of media, such as sand, water, shaving foam and paint. In the creative area there is great excitement as a group of children design and make Easter cards, while outdoors, another group of children make pirate hats, flags and telescopes. Children enjoy mark making activities, digging in the sand, building with large bricks and role play in the pirate ship. There is also lots of excitement as children blow bubbles and watch with delight as they float up into the sky. They enjoy looking at books independently and with their friends, and at story time they listen with enjoyment to their favourite stories. Children are developing their information communication and technology skills as they confidently access a computer and programmable toys. They have good opportunities to develop their physical skills as they enjoy engaging in games using the parachute, pedal bikes and throw, catch, and kick balls. In addition, they relish weekly sessions in the school hall where they engage in music and movement sessions, ring games and explore the large apparatus. Children learn about the world around them as they attend special events at the local church and enjoy purchasing food at a local store which they then eat at snack time. They have good opportunities to explore their natural environment as they help to plant flowers, carrots and lettuce, engage in nature

walks and enjoy pond dipping.

Children are successfully encouraged to develop their own personal hygiene skills, such as independent toileting and automatically washing their hands before snacks. They learn about healthy lifestyles as they enjoy healthy snacks and engage in physical play activities each day. They also freely access drinking water throughout the session ensuring that they remain hydrated. Children are happy, develop good friendships with their peers and develop a good sense of belonging at the pre-school. Gentle reminders from staff help children develop a sense of right and wrong, they are encouraged to share, take turns and be kind to each other. Children have a good understanding of the wider world through access to resources that are representative of diversity, by exploring their local community and by celebrating festivals throughout the year. They learn how to stay safe as they engage in regular emergency evacuation procedures and learn about road safety while out on visits. Children demonstrate that they are acquiring good skills that will help and support them in their transition into full-time education

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