

Layer Preschool

Queen Elizabeth Hall, New Cut, Layer-de-la-Haye, Colchester, ESSEX, CO2 0JU

Inspection date

07/03/2014

Previous inspection date

30/04/2013

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This inspection:

3

Previous inspection:

3

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend 3

The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children 3

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision 3

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision requires improvement

- Children move confidently between the large hall and the well-equipped and exciting garden. They benefit from the wide range of learning experiences provided for them in the garden area.
- Children are provided with a an appropriately-balanced programme of activities. Practitioners generally support children's learning well, following their interests and using appropriate language to extend their thinking.
- Children are appropriately protected through the pre-school's policies and procedures on safeguarding children. Practitioners are encouraged to update their child protection knowledge through training.
- Partnerships with parents are strong. The pre-school has strengthened and improved ways of communicating with parents over the past year.

It is not yet good because

- The pre-school does not have effective systems for obtaining parent's written permission to take children on outings.
- Risk assessments are not robust enough to ensure children's safety at all times, especially with regards to access to a small bar/kitchen area.
- Opportunities are missed during routine activities, such as snack time, to fully explore children's mathematical skills.

Information about this inspection

Inspections of registered early years provision are:

- scheduled at least once in every inspection cycle – the current cycle ends on 31 July 2016
- scheduled more frequently where Ofsted identifies a need to do so, for example where provision was previously judged inadequate
- brought forward in the inspection cycle where Ofsted has received information that suggests the provision may not be meeting the legal requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage or where assessment of the provision identifies a need for early inspection
- prioritised where we have received information that the provision is not meeting the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and which suggests children may not be safe
- scheduled at the completion of an investigation into failure to comply with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed activities in the main hall, small hall and garden and inspected all other areas of the building used by the pre-school.
- The inspector held discussions with the chairperson, vice chairperson, manager, deputies, practitioners, local authority development worker, children and parents at appropriate times throughout the inspection.
- The inspector looked at a range of records including children's personal details, accident and medication records, the daily attendance register, information about practitioners' qualifications and the checks used to assess their suitability, written policies, risk assessments, parental permission forms and a selection of other relevant documentation.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents spoken to at the time of the inspection.

Inspector

Lynn Hughes

Full report

Information about the setting

Layer Preschool was originally established in 1972. It is registered on the Early Years Register. It is a committee run pre-school and operates from two halls within the Queen Elizabeth village hall, in Layer-de-la-Haye, Essex. The pre-school serves the local community and wider area and is accessible to all children. There is a fully enclosed garden available for outdoor play. The pre-school employs nine members of childcare staff, of whom seven hold appropriate childcare qualifications. The pre-school opens Monday to Friday, term time only. Sessions are from 9am until 3pm. A lunch club is available every day. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 57 children attending, all of whom are in the early years age group. The pre-school provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. It supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language and children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

To meet the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage the provider must:

- strengthen risk assessments to ensure that children's safety is paramount at all times. This is with regards to the door which leads into the small bar/kitchen area
- improve the procedures used to obtain written parental permission for children to take part in outings.

To further improve the quality of the early years provision the provider should:

- review snack time to provide opportunities for children to practice mathematics and to use mathematical terms during routine activities, for example, by counting how many plates and cups are needed and by pouring their own drinks to measuring volume.

Inspection judgements

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend

Children enjoy participating in a range of planned and freely chosen learning experiences, which help them to explore all seven areas of learning. Practitioners demonstrate appropriate knowledge of how children learn and use their expertise to tailor planning to meet individual children's learning requirements and styles. Key persons observe the children in their key worker groups and use their observations to identify children's next steps in learning. Development wheels are used to plot children's progress and are shared

with parents through open events and discussions.

Children's language development is promoted by practitioners using clear speech and asking appropriate questions. They generally follow children's interests and intervene in their play at appropriate times to support and guide children's learning. Children proficiently use technology when they freely access a laptop computer. Younger children explore an interesting selection of natural items and household resources indoors and outdoors. This enables them to follow their natural curiosity and to discover different textures and materials. Children enjoy being creative and expressing themselves through a range of different media. Role play and dressing up clothes encourage children to play imaginatively and to act out a range of scenarios. For example, the well-equipped hairdressers salon, provides exciting opportunities for children to act out styling each other's hair.

Some sessions are organised to provide older and more able children with opportunities to participate in activities, which are intended to stretch and challenge their thinking in readiness for school. The smaller hall is used at these times to provide a quiet area in which children can focus and concentrate. During the inspection, this time was used to discuss the colour and shape of the week and to explore feelings through a range of visual images. While most children participated well in this activity, some were not as actively engaged and chose to return to the large hall to participate in a music and movement session. Children's freedom of choice was respected and they were able to move freely back to the larger hall. The pre-school uses the focussed time to develop skills, which may prepare children for their next stages of learning. For example, children practise their emergent writing skills, learn to listen and take directions and have opportunities to converse in large and small groups.

The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children

Children settle well at the pre-school and form close and caring relationships with the practitioners. The effective settling-in procedures enable parents, key persons and children to determine when children are ready to begin their pre-school life. Parents provide key persons with clear written information about the children's routines, likes and dislikes through a well-presented 'all about me' booklet. Parents attend an induction meeting whereby they learn about the pre-school's procedures and planning. During this meeting, parents sign a checklist confirming that they have been informed of the various aspects of the provision, including the fact that children often go for walks in the local environment to enhance their learning. The pre-school leaders and management had taken this parental signature to be the parent's written permission for them to take children on outings. However, the wording of this document is not robust enough to provide effective permission. Therefore, at present this requirement is not being met.

The pre-school makes good use of the premises by utilising the large hall and a smaller hall. The large hall is set out each day with a wide range of learning experiences and activities, which cover all seven areas of learning. A well-equipped and exciting garden provides opportunities for children to make choices about whether they learn indoors or outdoors. This enables practitioners to take account of children's individual learning styles

when planning activities. Children behave well at the pre-school and practitioners generally act as good role models.

Children enjoy a mid-session snack during their pre-school day. The snack is based on a healthy option of fresh fruit and savoury alternatives. Children are provided with some opportunities to develop independence during routine activities, for example, they peel and cut their own fruit and usually pour their own drinks. There are however, missed opportunities to use routine activities, such as snack time, to develop children's learning, for example, through mathematics. Children remain well-hydrated as they safely access fresh drinking water throughout the session. Children learn about keeping safe and healthy through the pre-school's themes, topics and activities. They understand that fresh air and exercise are good for them and receive this through daily outdoor play in the pre-school garden. Practitioners remind children to follow good hygiene practices, such as, washing their hands after using the toilet and before touching food. Older children independently access the toilets and hand-washing facilities, further enhancing their independence skills.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision

Children are appropriately protected from harm as the pre-school has clear written policies and procedures on safeguarding children. All practitioners update their safeguarding knowledge through relevant training courses. The leaders and management of the pre-school demonstrate a sound understanding of the requirements to safeguarding children. Following a recent incident, they appropriately notified Ofsted and a full investigation took place into the circumstances of the incident. The leaders and management have taken legal advice on how to deal with the situation and reviewed all relevant policies to ensure practitioners remain vigilant. All adults working with children are vetted and proof of the checks used to assess their suitability is available on file. Children generally play in a safe and secure environment. However, risk assessments regarding the use of a small bar/kitchen area are not rigorous enough. Attempts to keep this area safe are made by the practitioners placing a no-entry sign on the door and on occasions closing it, however, these measures do not go far enough to ensure children do not enter the room and come in contact with a range of potentially hazardous items.

The pre-school is run by a voluntary committee who support the manager, deputies and team of practitioners. The committee is strong and works well together. This results in generally effective operational procedures. The vice chair of the committee and the manager have clear monitoring roles, which enable them to review and evaluate a range of aspects of the pre-school on a monthly basis. The action plan they devise is effectively reviewed and updated as improvements are implemented. However, some aspects of daily practice are not as robust as they could be and have resulted in some legal requirements not being fully met. Annual practitioner appraisals enable the committee to keep abreast of the practitioner's training needs, skills and strengths. The manager also conducts monthly supervision meetings, which enable her to discuss individual children's progress and to monitor the quality of teaching, providing a good forum for the manager to provide the practitioners with feedback on the quality of their work.

Partnerships with parents and others are secure. Parents are provided with a good range of written and verbal information about the pre-school. Recent improvements to the pre-school's systems for involving parents in their children's learning, have resulted in parents playing a much greater role in settling their children into pre-school life. The improved sharing of information about children's starting points informs each child's initial assessment. Parents are invited to attend open events to discuss their children's progress and to play an active part in identifying their children's next steps in learning. The pre-school has good links with the local school, which is situated close by and work closely with other schools, into which they feed. They aide a smooth transition for children leaving pre-school and entering school by visiting the school with the children, providing opportunities for them to explore the various uniforms and by planning a range of activities that help children to prepare for this stage of their life. Partnerships with other early years settings, which children attend are formed by the key person visiting the other settings or communicating through a three way dairy with the parents. This has proven very successful for children with speech and language difficulties or who have other outside agencies supporting them.

What inspection judgements mean

Registered early years provision

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	Outstanding provision is highly effective in meeting the needs of all children exceptionally well. This ensures that children are very well prepared for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 2	Good	Good provision is effective in delivering provision that meets the needs of all children well. This ensures children are ready for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	The provision is not giving children a good standard of early years education and/or there are minor breaches of the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be monitored and inspected within twelve months of the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	Provision that is inadequate requires significant improvement and/or enforcement action. The provision is failing to give children an acceptable standard of early years education and/or is not meeting the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be monitored and inspected again within six months of the date of this inspection.
Met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider continues to meet the requirements for registration.
Not met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider does not meet the requirements for registration.

Inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of provision that is registered on the Early Years Register. The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and care, known as the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Setting details

Unique reference number	203940
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	959576
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 5
Total number of places	32
Number of children on roll	57
Name of provider	Layer Pre-School Committee
Date of previous inspection	30/04/2013
Telephone number	01206 734348

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Type of provision

For the purposes of this inspection the following definitions apply:

Full-time provision is that which operates for more than three hours. These are usually known as nurseries, nursery schools and pre-schools and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the higher fee for registration.

Sessional provision operates for more than two hours but does not exceed three hours in any one day. These are usually known as pre-schools, kindergartens or nursery schools

and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the lower fee for registration.

Childminders care for one or more children where individual children attend for a period of more than two hours in any one day. They operate from domestic premises, which are usually the childminder's own home. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Out of school provision may be sessional or full-time provision and is delivered before or after school and/or in the summer holidays. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. Where children receive their Early Years Foundation Stage in school these providers do not have to deliver the learning and development requirements in full but should complement the experiences children receive in school.

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