

The Tops Foundation Pre-School

The Community Centre, Salcott Crescent, Wick Meadows Estate, Wickford, Essex, SS12 9NR



Inspection date

22 March 2016

Previous inspection date

4 November 2011

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	Good	2
	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
Effectiveness of the leadership and management		Good	2
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Good	2
Personal development, behaviour and welfare		Good	2
Outcomes for children		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents

This provision is good

- Staff work very well together and provide various learning opportunities. They have strong organisational skills and make good use of space and resources. Children are engaged in their chosen activities and are engrossed in their play.
- The key-person system is well established and successful. This enables children to form secure attachments with adults caring for them and for their parents to share information to support their learning.
- Children's physical and emotional well-being are promoted well. Staff provide lots of opportunities for children to enjoy fresh air and exercise, which contributes towards a healthy lifestyle. Children thrive and staff constantly recognise and praise their efforts and achievements.
- Safety is highly prioritised. Staff complete effective risk assessments to ensure all areas of the provision and equipment are suitable for use.

It is not yet outstanding because:

- The newly introduced system for monitoring staff practice is not yet identifying some weaknesses, such as when next steps for some children are not sharply focused to extend and support their skills and knowledge further.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- sharpen the focus on monitoring staff practice and evaluate the impact of this on raising the level of progress in children's learning.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed the quality of teaching during activities indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact this has on children's learning.
- The inspector completed a joint observation with the pre-school manager.
- The inspector held a meeting with the pre-school manager. She looked at relevant documentation, such as the pre-school's self-evaluation and evidence of the suitability of staff working in the pre-school.
- The inspector spoke to a small selection of parents during the inspection and took account of their views.

Inspector

Tina Mason

Inspection findings

Effectiveness of the leadership and management is good

Safeguarding is effective. All staff have a robust understanding of the child protection procedures. They all know how to manage and minimise any risks to children. This is achieved through training opportunities, daily discussions and staff meetings. The pre-school is well organised and safe. The highly experienced and long-standing staff team shows a strong commitment to delivering a good provision. Various systems of self-evaluation contribute to good outcomes for children. Parents speak highly of the staff and are provided with a wealth of good information. Good links with schools and secure systems for engaging other professionals are in place. This means children's achievements are shared effectively, helping staff support them to make the best progress based on their unique needs.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

The well-qualified staff team has a good knowledge of how children learn. They plan activities that follow children's interests and, as a result, children are engaged in their learning and make good progress. Children use their imagination during creative activities, exploring a range of materials and media independently. Children demonstrate good coordination and control as they safely use small tools with competence. They are well prepared for their transfer to school. Children learn to read, write and use mathematics as they play, which helps them to see the purpose of these skills. Staff are highly skilled in using questions to prompt children to think for themselves. Children's communication and language skills are supported well as staff engage them in meaningful conversation and introduce new vocabulary.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare are good

The caring and considerate staff team provides a welcoming and child-friendly environment. Children arrive happy, skipping into the pre-school, and confidently settle in their play. Parents and carers offer positive feedback about how much their children enjoy attending the setting. Children show good levels of independence and are comfortable within their surroundings. This gives children a strong sense of belonging and promotes their emotional well-being. Children are helped to understand what staff expect of their behaviour. Staff are consistent in their approach and are good role models. Children learn to share, take turns and be kind to one another. Children have formed close bonds with their key person and feel very safe and secure. The outdoor area is used effectively for a full range of activities and there are plenty of opportunities for children to be physically active. Staff provide a wide range of activities to help children to learn about people, communities and the world in which they live.

Outcomes for children are good

Children are confident, happy and make good progress in their learning given their starting points. Children acquire good listening and speaking skills as they become confident communicators. Older children are beginning to recognise letter sounds. They are well prepared for future learning at school.

Setting details

Unique reference number	204101
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	854332
Type of provision	Sessional provision
Day care type	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Age range of children	3 - 4
Total number of places	26
Number of children on roll	68
Name of provider	Karen Pamela Hughes
Date of previous inspection	4 November 2011
Telephone number	01268 766218

The Tops Foundation Pre-School registered in 1997. The pre-school opens Monday to Friday, term time only. Sessions are from 9am until 11.30am and 12.30pm until 2.30pm. The pre-school provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year old children. There are 10 members of childcare staff employed, all of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications ranging from level 2 to level 6.

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