

Inspection of Alresford Pre-School

Alresford Primary School, Ford Lane, Alresford, COLCHESTER, Essex CO7 8AU

Inspection date: 22 September 2021

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good
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What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children settle well and form strong bonds with staff, who are attentive to their individual needs. Children show high levels of independence, both in learning and self-care skills, such as serving snack, washing their hands and using the toilet. They are well prepared for the next stage in their learning, including school. Children are confident to explore the environment. They delight in playing with materials, such as sand, and play dough scented with Italian herbs. Children develop their language skills as they talk about how it smells and how it feels.

Children develop good communication skills. They benefit from enthusiastic staff who get down to their level, speak clearly and add new words into their vocabulary, such as 'search tower'. All children learn sign language from staff as another way to communicate their needs and how they are feeling. Children show care and empathy towards each other. Older children offer cuddles to younger children on their first days of pre-school.

Children learn good manners and how to keep themselves safe. They cover their mouths when coughing and know to hold onto the bars when on the climbing frame. Children have well-developed imaginations, that staff continue to foster. Children delight in rowing the wooden play boat to 'Africa' and talking about the animals they can see.

What does the early years setting do well and what does it need to do better?

- The newly appointed manager is very committed to her role. She is extremely knowledgeable about child development and passionate about educating her staff team in these skills. She is an excellent role model to staff. The new manager has a deep understanding about the theory behind how children learn. She helps staff to provide a learning environment that is engaging and that meets children's evolving learning needs. Staff recognise specific needs of children and implement specific funding they have available, effectively.
- Partnerships with parents are strong. During the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic, staff kept in regular touch with families and provided a range of ideas for them to help with their children's learning at home. Staff are considerate of parents' individual needs, helping them to participate in their children's learning regardless of their circumstance.
- Staff form effective partnerships with the primary school. They share information about the children's needs and development. Staff arrange visits from reception teachers to ensure a smooth transition for the children and parents.
- The manager and staff have a good knowledge of how children learn. They engage and adapt their practice during children's play. Staff understand the importance of following children's interests. For example, building on children's

interest in space, staff teach songs that help children learn and remember a variety of new concepts and words. Children know that Mercury is the closest planet to the sun and talk regularly about the 'solar system'. However, staff sometimes step in to solve problems for children, instead of helping them to find the answers themselves.

- Staff feel well supported by the new manager and committee. They are provided with regular training and feedback on their practice. Staff's own interests are valued. The new manager has assigned staff roles, so they can embark on their own research into specific areas of early childhood development they are interested in. The entire staff team are committed to improving the quality of care they provide.
- The manager and staff know the importance of working on children's physical skills before they can learn to hold a pen or write. Children have a wide range of activities to do this in the garden and inside. They develop their large- and small-motor skills in most activities. Children are starting to recognise and form letters.
- Children's emotional well-being is a high priority to staff. They get to know children extremely well. Staff take great care in ensuring children's transition into the setting is a seamless one. Staff step in when they see unwanted behaviour and ask children to stop. However, they do not always help children to understand the reasons why some behaviour is not appropriate towards others.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff can identify the signs and symptoms of abuse and know the action to take if they have a concern. They have a secure knowledge of the setting's whistle-blowing policy if they are concerned about another staff member. Staff can identify wider safeguarding issues, including signs of extreme and radical behaviour. The manager and committee have safe recruitment procedures in place to ensure that staff are suitable to work with children. Staff place a high importance on keeping children safe. Strict procedures are in place to ensure children who have food allergies are protected from harm.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- help staff to develop their skills in supporting children to solve problems for themselves
- support children to gain a better understanding of the impact their behaviour may have on others.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY480293
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10206711
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Day care type	Sessional day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	2 to 4
Total number of places	30
Number of children on roll	26
Name of registered person	Alresford Pre-School
Registered person unique reference number	RP533869
Telephone number	077241 24223
Date of previous inspection	26 April 2018

Information about this early years setting

Alresford Pre-School registered in 2014 and is based in the grounds of Alresford Primary School. The pre-school employs four members of childcare staff. Of these, two hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3. The pre-school opens term time only. Sessions are from 8.45am to 3.15pm Monday, Wednesday and Thursday, and 8.45am to 11.45am on Tuesdays. The pre-school provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Daniella Adams

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the provider received since the COVID 19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the provider and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the provider.
- The manager joined the inspector on a learning walk and talked to the inspector about their curriculum and what they want their children to learn.
- The inspector observed the quality of education being provided, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact that this was having on children's learning.
- Staff spoke to the inspector during the inspection.
- The manager and the inspector carried out a joint observation of an activity.
- The inspector spoke to a parent during the inspection and took account of written views.
- The inspector looked at relevant documentation and reviewed evidence of the suitability of staff working in the pre-school.

We carried out this inspection 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.

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