

Inspection of Woodham Mortimer Pre-School

Brookhead Farm, Maldon Road, Woodham Mortimer, Maldon, Essex CM9 6GP

Inspection date: 4 March 2022

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	Outstanding
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What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children settle into the pre-school well and are familiar with the routine of the session. They enjoy talking to their friends during group time, such as when they discuss the costumes they wear to celebrate World Book Day. They respond quickly to staff's instructions. For instance, children stop instantly when staff shake the tambourine to gain their attention.

Children demonstrate high levels of concentration. They confidently choose from the activities on offer. For instance, children choose to play with the dough. They speak to staff about what they are making. They carefully use the tools to shape the dough. They focus and stay at the activity for a long time, engrossed in what they are doing.

Children are imaginative as they play. For example, they pretend to make different types of food. They talk confidently to visitors about what they are making. They answer questions, sharing their thoughts and ideas. For instance, they talk about the different fillings in the pretend pies they make. Children learn about safety. For example, they listen to staff and pretend to put on oven gloves before placing their creations into the imaginary oven. These play experiences help children to understand how to stay safe in their homes.

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

- Staff know the children they care for well. For instance, they talk to the children about the seaside as they play in the sand tray. Children speak about what they saw on a trip to the beach with their family. Staff ask children how they feel about becoming an older sibling soon. This helps children to share their feelings and make connections between their experiences at the pre-school and at home.
- Children enjoy learning about the world around them. They excitedly tell staff that they have found a bug outside. Staff support them to carefully handle the bug so that they do not hurt it. They help to build children's vocabulary, introducing new words, such as 'beetle'. Children then share this new found knowledge. For instance, they show staff and their friends the bug and tell them it is a beetle.
- Parents speak highly of the staff team. They talk about the strong support that they received from staff during the COVID-19 pandemic. For instance, staff shared activities so that parents could extend their children's learning at home. The manager acts on suggestions from parents. She implements new ideas, such as introducing parent consultation evenings. Parents are actively involved in the pre-school. The committee run fundraising events to help pay for new resources. Parents help with repairs, such as fixing the outdoor classroom following a recent storm. As a result, families feel part of the pre-school.

community.

- Staff say that they feel well supported in their roles and work well as a team. They meet together regularly to review children's progress and plan for what they need to learn next. Staff provide one another with feedback. They praise their colleagues and make suggestions of how to improve activities. The manager monitors this feedback closely to ensure that it is constructive and beneficial.
- Children become highly independent. They are actively involved in preparing snack. They serve themselves and pour their own water and milk. Staff encourage children to sit and eat with others at mealtimes, and open their own containers. Older children learn to sit and concentrate for longer periods of time, such as during group time. Staff recognise that this will help children to make the most of what school has to offer when they move on.
- Staff provide children with opportunities to make marks and develop their early writing skills. For instance, younger children draw lines on their artwork, telling staff that they have written their name. However, some staff do not extend children's understanding of the marks they make. They write children's names on their work for them, but do not explain what they write in order to inspire children's interest in early writing skills.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff have a strong understanding of how to keep children safe. They complete appropriate safeguarding training to help them to recognise when children may be at risk of harm. The manager regularly checks the knowledge of her staff team, such as during staff meetings. She has robust policies in place. The chair of the committee understands her role and responsibilities in relation to safeguarding. Staff are confident in the process to follow should they need to raise concerns regarding children's welfare. They know how to report issues regarding their colleagues so that they can be dealt with appropriately.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- support staff to provide children with consistent opportunities to understand what the marks they make represent and to develop their early writing skills further.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY474255
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10127341
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years 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	54
Name of registered person	Woodham Mortimer Preschool Committee
Registered person unique reference number	RP902014
Telephone number	07742228077
Date of previous inspection	8 July 2014

Information about this early years setting

Woodham Mortimer Pre-School registered in 2014. The pre-school employs 11 members of childcare staff. Of these, 10 hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 2 and above. The manager holds a relevant qualification at level 5. The pre-school opens Monday to Friday during school term times. It operates between 9am and 3.30pm. The pre-school provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Jenny Hardy

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the provider received since the COVID-19 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 and deputy manager joined the inspector on a learning walk and talked to the inspector about their curriculum and what they want children to learn.
- The inspector held discussions with parents and committee members. She took their views into consideration.
- The inspector spoke to children and staff at appropriate times throughout the inspection.
- The manager and inspector jointly observed staff's interactions with children. They discussed the impact of these on children's learning.
- The inspector looked at a selection of relevant documentation, including staff suitability documents.

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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