

Inspection of YMCA Maidstone Pre-school – Loose

Maidstone YMCA, Melrose Close, Cripple Street, Maidstone, Kent ME15 6BD

Inspection date: 30 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	Good
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What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

All children are happy, confident and settled. They are keen to join in with the interesting activities that staff plan for them. For example, children enthusiastically learn about the life cycle of a butterfly. They create a large model caterpillar and explore patterns as they paint butterflies. Children enjoy stories and recognise letters of the alphabet with confidence. Children are eager to explore and investigate. They are excited to watch what happens when they mix liquids to make an erupting volcano. All children are independent. They are confident to choose their own play and complete their own tasks.

Children are polite and behave well. They make friends and enjoy each other's company. Children learn about the importance of healthy lifestyles. For example, they talk about different food groups and the benefits on their bodies, such as calcium being good for their teeth and bones. All children develop good physical skills. They confidently balance and climb on equipment, such as they walk along logs and use climbing walls. Staff use additional funding effectively to meet the individual learning needs of children. For instance, they have purchased outdoor equipment to build on children's physical abilities.

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

- All staff establish positive relationships with children. They get to know each child and their personalities well. This helps staff continue to plan activities that they know will motivate children to learn. Staff support all children to make good progress. This includes children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language. For example, they attend specialist training to fully understand how to support individual children. Staff use children's home languages alongside speaking English, to help children's understanding and extend their English vocabulary.
- The manager and staff build and maintain positive relationships with parents. They communicate with them daily. Staff keep parents well involved and informed in their children's achievements. For example, they share photos of what children have enjoyed learning. Staff routinely share useful information with parents, this includes healthy eating tips and ideas.
- Staff know if their key children attend another early years setting. They discuss they would make contact with them to talk about any concerns about children's development, if necessary. However, staff do not routinely provide the highest level of consistency to children's shared care and learning experiences. They do not yet make the most out of more effective ways to communicate and share information with settings that they also attend.
- All staff evaluate their practice together. For example, at the end of each day they discuss how well they have engaged children in their learning experiences.

Staff use their findings to enhance their future activity plans. The manager closely monitors the good quality of care and teaching that staff provide. She routinely observes staff teaching children and provides them with helpful feedback to support their future performance.

- The manager and staff attend regular training and build on their already good knowledge and skills. They have recently learned about the different ways to motivate children in outdoor learning experiences. As a result, children are more engaged outdoors and enjoy more opportunities. This includes collecting natural items, such as moss and fir cones, to build an insect house and bird nest.
- Overall, staff support children to develop some good communication skills. Children show positive attitudes to their learning and are confident to share their ideas and thoughts during role-play activities. Staff speak to the children as they play. However, they do not consistently ask them thought-provoking questions and give them enough time to think and then respond when they do.
- Staff provide children with good opportunities to understand the similarities and differences of other people outside of their own experiences and communities. This includes the traditions of other cultures and countries. For example, children use chop sticks to 'write' Chinese symbols with paint as they learn about Chinese New Year.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

All staff, including the manager, have a good knowledge and understanding of safeguarding and child protection. They understand the signs of abuse and know who to contact to seek advice and how to raise and follow up potential concerns. Staff discuss safeguarding in each team meeting and during individual discussions. They complete regular training to help them keep their knowledge up to date. Staff carry out detailed risk assessments to help keep children safe. This includes equipment, activities and practice to minimise the risk of COVID-19. They closely monitor any accidents and childhood illness within the setting. This is to help ensure that they minimise any risk and help keep all children safe and healthy.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- develop a more consistent approach to the sharing of information with other settings children attend
- extend staff's use of questioning to provide even more opportunities to challenge children's critical thinking skills.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY419802
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10228550
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	28
Number of children on roll	49
Name of registered person	Maidstone YMCA
Registered person unique reference number	RP901717
Telephone number	01622 749404
Date of previous inspection	28 September 2016

Information about this early years setting

YMCA Maidstone Pre-school- Loose registered in 2011. It is located in YMCA community centre, Maidstone in Kent. The setting is open Monday and Friday from 9am until 3pm, term time only. The setting receives funding to provide free early education for children aged two, three and four years. The setting employs 11 members of staff, four of whom hold a relevant early years qualification at level 2 and six members of staff hold a relevant early years qualification at level 3.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Kelly Hawkins

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 inspector carried out a learning walk with the manager. The inspector assessed the impact of the quality of staff interactions and the learning opportunities they provide children.
- The inspector viewed the indoor and outdoor learning environments.
- Written documentation was reviewed. This included safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures.
- The manager and inspector carried out a joint observation on an outdoor learning experience.
- The inspector spoke to the manager, children, parents and staff at convenient times and considered their views.

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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