

# Inspection of Merton Pre-School

C/O Merton Infant School, Romsey Close, Popley, BASINGSTOKE, Hampshire RG24 9HB

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Inspection date: 9 September 2022

## **Overall effectiveness**

## **Requires improvement**

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The quality of education

**Good**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Good**

Personal development

**Requires improvement**

Leadership and management

**Requires improvement**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Outstanding

## **What is it like to attend this early years setting?**

### **The provision requires improvement**

Children confidently enter the pre-school and excitedly explore the wide variety of experiences, both indoors and outdoors. They demonstrate high levels of concentration and become deeply involved in their work and play. For example, children focus for long periods making pictures and proudly showing one another what they have made. They are developing knowledge and skills across all seven areas of learning.

Current procedures for checking the suitability of those on the pre-school committee are not effective. While these systems need improving, leaders do complete suitability checks for those working directly with children. This limits the impact on children's safety and well-being.

Leaders put a strong focus on the importance of developing children's communication and language skills. For example, children attend daily focus groups that support their concentration and introduce new vocabulary. Their communication and language skills are strong and they frequently hold thoughtful conversations with others. For example, children excitedly race trucks up hills in the garden and talk about who is winning. Children have the skills they need for future learning.

Children behave well and staff have high expectations of their behaviour. They use imaginative strategies to introduce expected behaviours, such as introducing animal characters with desired behaviours that the children will aspire to be like. For example, when children struggle to take turns with the bricks, staff talk to them about 'being kind like Danny Dog'. Children are beginning to understand how to regulate their behaviour.

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

- The provider does not fully understand their role and therefore does not carry out the requirements of their role effectively. For example, they fail to ensure all pre-school committee members are suitable, which poses a risk to children's welfare.
- Staff benefit from regular training that supports improvements in their teaching over time. For example, they explain that after attending training that focuses on communication, they acknowledge the need to focus on children's concentration skills before targeting their developing vocabulary. Although staff attend training, some staff take on a supervisory role and are fully effective in recognising the importance of quality interactions with children.
- Leaders engage well with schools and have regular meetings with teachers to discuss transitions for children. For example, Reception class teachers detail

what skills children need at the beginning of the school term. Staff focus on teaching children independence in their self-care skills. Teachers regularly visit the pre-school to ensure children have a smooth transition when the time comes for them to move to school.

- Staff at the pre-school are passionate about the importance of healthy choices around food, rest and exercise. They have a wide variety of activities to support children to learn about this for themselves. For example, children eagerly run a 'minute mile' in the morning to start their day. Staff talk to the children about the effect exercise has on their bodies. Children are learning how to keep themselves healthy.
- Staff recognise the importance of supporting children's emotional well-being and developing their character. For example, they cuddle and comfort children who need emotional support. They sit and share pictures of their families and talk openly about the children's homes. Children are beginning to understand what makes them unique.
- Leaders adopt a curriculum that builds on what the children already know and can do. For example, children begin learning woodwork by hammering nails into wood. Once they have mastered this skill, they move onto attaching two pieces together before finally having the ability to design their own construction. Children's knowledge and skills build over time.
- Staff skilfully encourage children to challenge themselves. For example, when children struggle to put coats on for themselves, staff inspire them to try and do up their zips. Children are increasingly independent and try hard when they encounter difficulties.
- The pre-school has strong partnerships with parents. Parents appreciate the regular updates they receive about their children and use this to support their children's learning at home. Parents enjoy attending open days and family events, such as gardening and father's day. Children feel a sense of trust and belonging. Parents say that leaders and staff are approachable and value their friendly manner. They explain that children have made good progress in their development since attending pre-school.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

Despite breaches of requirement, leaders promote a positive, open and honest safeguarding culture. Staff know how to spot signs and symptoms of safeguarding issues. For example, they know how to report if they have concerns about a child being at risk of radicalisation. Staff regularly attend training to keep their knowledge up to date. They carry out daily risk assessments to minimise the risk to children. They also ensure they risk assess all new activities they introduce. For example, staff risk assess the new bicycle track before children use it.

## **What does the setting need to do to improve?**

**To meet the requirements of the early years foundation stage and**

**Childcare Register the provider must:**

	<b>Due date</b>
provide Ofsted with the required information to enable suitability checks to be completed for all pre-school committee members.	30/09/2022

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

- strengthen support and coaching for all staff to help develop their understanding of how to make the most of all opportunities to interact with children.

## Setting details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	511077
<b>Local authority</b>	Hampshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10228038
<b>Type of provision</b>	Childcare on non-domestic premises
<b>Registers</b>	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
<b>Day care type</b>	Sessional day care
<b>Age range of children at time of inspection</b>	2 to 4
<b>Total number of places</b>	30
<b>Number of children on roll</b>	30
<b>Name of registered person</b>	Merton Pre-School Committee
<b>Registered person unique reference number</b>	RP908418
<b>Telephone number</b>	01256 353100
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	6 October 2016

## Information about this early years setting

Merton Pre-School registered in 1999. It is situated within the grounds of Merton Infants School in Basingstoke, Hampshire. The pre-school opens during school term times from 9am to 3pm, Monday to Friday. It is in receipt of funding for the provision of free early education for children aged two, three and four years. There are seven staff, all of whom hold appropriate qualifications from level 3 to level 6.

## Information about this inspection

### Inspector

Mandy Cooper

## Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the pre-school 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 inspector completed a learning walk together of all areas of the pre-school and discussed the early years curriculum.
- The inspector talked to staff at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The inspector looked at relevant documentation and reviewed evidence of the suitability of staff working at the pre-school.
- The inspector spoke to several parents during the inspection and took account of their views.
- Children spoke to the inspector during the inspection.

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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