

Inspection of Polstead Preschool

St. Margaret's Institute, 30 Polstead Road, OXFORD OX2 6TN

Inspection date: 3 March 2023

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 and parents are welcomed warmly by staff, as parents drop their children off for the day. Staff take time to talk to parents individually and ensure a positive two-way flow of information, so that they can fully support children's well-being during the session. As a result, children feel safe and secure, and settle quickly into their play. Children show that they are keen to learn, as they engage in a range of interesting adult-led activities. For example, they are eager to get involved as they learn the concepts of weight and measurement. Children estimate which trucks are longer and heavier out of a set. They busily test their theories out using tape measures and weighing scales in order to make comparisons.

Children follow instruction well as staff gently remind them to use their listening ears during group activities. Their thoughts and opinions are thoroughly valued by staff. Staff embrace the cultural diversity within the setting. They plan activities to help children learn about different cultures and how people live in other countries. This helps all children to feel included and gain a sense of belonging, as well as learn about the world around them. There are ample opportunities for children to be physically active. They strengthen their leg and arm muscles as they climb apparatus. Children relish time set aside to practise riding bicycles and are becoming competent and confident at cycling.

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

- The pre-school supervisor and staff plan a broad and interesting curriculum, which helps children to continually achieve, consolidate, and move on to the next stage in their learning. They aim to provide children with a wide range of experiences to broaden their overall knowledge. For example, children can confidently share their knowledge of planets and the moon following a recent focus on this subject.
- Staff monitor children's development closely. They share information about their key children across the team. As a result, all staff know what all children need to achieve next to move on in their learning. However, at times they do not tailor their interactions to ensure that children benefit fully from the intended learning, or to extend their learning.
- Children enjoy exploring the range of activities on offer. They focus and concentrate intently as they make marks on paper with a range of resources to develop their early writing skills. However, staff do not always organise the environment to ensure that children have access to rich learning opportunities during child-led play. As a result, there are times when children are not engaged in meaningful learning.
- Partnerships with parents are highly positive. Parents were keen to share their positive experiences of the pre-school during the inspection. They feel that their

children make good progress in their learning under the care of a kind and welcoming staff team. Parents feel well informed about their child's development, and that their children are safe and happy.

- All children, including those who speak English as an additional language, make good progress in their speech development. Staff ask children lots of open questions to encourage them to express themselves and recall previous learning. For example, during a reading activity, staff ask children questions about what they can remember happens in the story. Children relish playing games where they guess the words of sounds which are played out to them.
- The committee are well engaged and have a good oversight of the running of the pre-school. All staff feel well supported by the supervisor and the committee. Staff receive regular supervisions and feedback about their practice. They meet regularly as a team to reflect on the quality of the provision and ways in which they can enhance the curriculum.
- Children behave well. They understand expectations for behaviour as a result of the gentle reminders staff provide. Children understand the importance of sharing and being kind to their friends. They form positive friendships and enjoy playing together and alongside each other. Children chat together at mealtimes, sharing their knowledge of healthy eating and which foods they like to eat.
- Staff positively support children's independence. Children pour their own drinks at snack time. They tidy their plates and cups away after eating. Children are learning to put on their own outdoor clothing when they get ready to play outdoors. Staff provide gentle guidance to encourage younger children to try to put their own coats on, followed with lots of praise. This encourages children to keep trying and take pride in their achievements.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The committee have a clear understanding of their safeguarding responsibilities, such as the procedures they must follow if there is an allegation against the supervisor. Staff demonstrate a good understanding of the signs, which could indicate a child is at risk of harm or abuse. They know the procedures they must follow if they have concerns about a child's welfare or a member of staff's behaviour towards children. The designated safeguarding lead is clear about her responsibilities to maintain a two-way flow of information with other agencies involved in child protection. Staff continually risk assess the areas where children play to ensure that children are not exposed to harm, and to ensure that children are closely supervised.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- review the organisation of the environment and activities to ensure that children are consistently engaged in rich learning opportunities during child-led play
- enhance staff practice to ensure that all children experience high-quality interactions in order to extend their learning and help them to fully benefit from the intended learning.

Setting details

Unique reference number	133989
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	10279653
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	2 to 4
Total number of places	24
Number of children on roll	22
Name of registered person	Polstead Preschool Oxford Committee
Registered person unique reference number	RP905673
Telephone number	01865 428586
Date of previous inspection	16 November 2018

Information about this early years setting

Polstead Preschool first registered in 1992. It operates from a community building in Oxford. The pre-school opens weekdays between 9am and 3pm, during term time. It employs four members of staff, three of whom have relevant qualifications, including one who holds early years professional status.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Carla Roberts

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.
- We carried out this inspection as a result of a risk assessment, following information we received about 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 talked to staff at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The inspector spoke with the nominated individual/registered individual about the leadership and management of the setting.
- Parents shared their views of the setting with the inspector.
- The inspector observed the quality of education being provided, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact that this was having on children's learning.

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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