

Inspection of Harwich Centre Pre-School

Harwich Centre Pre-school, Adult Community Learning, Main Road, Harwich CO12 4AJ

Inspection date: 4 October 2023

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| 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, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good progress at the pre-school. Familiar staff greet the children at the beginning of each session. As a result, children are supported to leave their parents confidently on arrival at the pre-school gates. Children are happy and confident, showing that they feel safe and secure in the familiar environment.

Children have many opportunities to practise their physical skills. Younger children develop their balance and core strength as they lift, jump and climb on the large soft-play equipment. Older children are starting to learn the importance of keeping themselves safe. Staff support them to understand why they need to wait their turn on the slide. Children learn to take risks as they use the spin see-saw. Staff plan a range of activities and resources to help children develop their fine motor skills, such as painting and play dough. This helps to strengthen the small muscles in children's fingers and hands in readiness for early writing.

Children are becoming confident communicators. Staff continually talk to children during activities and ask them questions. Staff use positive methods to help children with additional needs to engage in learning experiences. For instance, they use the child's name to help them refocus their attention and sustain their concentration.

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

- Staff gather information from parents about children's care and learning needs when they start at the pre-school. This helps them to get to know children and their families well and has a positive impact on children's emotional development. Staff use the information gathered to plan children's next steps so that their learning is sequenced to build on prior knowledge.
- The manager has a clear curriculum and understands what she wants children to learn. She places a strong focus on helping children to gain high levels of independence. However, on occasion, this is not consistently implemented by staff. For example, staff sometimes complete tasks that children can do for themselves, such as putting on an apron or selecting their own fruit at snack time. This limits children's opportunities to practise these skills.
- Children's well-being is promoted consistently. Staff provide children with plenty of praise and encouragement throughout the day, which helps to promote their confidence and resilience. For example, staff demonstrate how to use the twist-up glue sticks and spend time supporting children to use them. Children celebrate their good behaviour and achievements at circle time. They applaud and give each other a 'whoop, whoop' as children proudly recall what it is that they have done to earn the reward. This helps build children's confidence and

reinforces their positive attitudes to learning.

- The special educational needs coordinators and staff work closely with parents and other professionals, such as speech and language therapists, to plan and support children's learning. They implement specific strategies, such as using sign language, to assist children's emerging language and communication. Children's next steps are shared with families to further their development at home. This helps to provide a consistent approach to supporting children's learning and development.
- Partnerships with parents are especially strong. Parents are eager to share positive feedback about the pre-school. They are grateful for the range of support provided by the manager and her team. Parents comment that their children have made significant progress in their learning since attending the pre-school.
- The manager makes good use of additional funding to enhance children's experiences. For example, they have purchased additional equipment to support children's physical development. In addition, they have created a sensory area in the garden in which staff can support children who become overwhelmed to calm and focus. This helps children to learn how to regulate their emotions. This has had a positive impact on the children. As a result, children behave well.
- The manager is supportive of her team, and staff report feeling valued and enjoying their roles. Regular training opportunities ensure that staff are motivated to keep learning to develop their skills. Staff receive supervision and coaching from the senior team. However, the monitoring of staff teaching is not yet rigorous enough to identify areas where staff can further improve their practice.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The manager and her staff understand their responsibilities in keeping children safe from harm. There are designated staff to take the lead in child protection concerns. Staff complete regular training to ensure their knowledge is current. The manager provides quizzes to her team to make sure their knowledge has been retained. Staff are aware of the signs and indicators that may mean a child is at risk of harm or abuse. They know when and how to report concerns they have about a child in their care or about a colleague. Robust recruitment processes are in place to ensure that those working with children are suitable to do so.

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 maximise opportunities for children to be independent in their self-care routines

- strengthen the link between monitoring of practice and providing staff with support and coaching to raise staff teaching to an even higher level.

Setting details

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| Unique reference number | EY272636 |
| Local authority | Essex |
| Inspection number | 10311253 |
| 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 | 50 |
| Number of children on roll | 82 |
| Name of registered person | Essex County Council |
| Registered person unique reference number | RP901507 |
| Telephone number | 03330 132437 |
| Date of previous inspection | 2 February 2018 |

Information about this early years setting

Harwich Centre Pre-school opened in 1975 and is based in Harwich, Essex. The pre-school employs 11 members of staff. All hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 2 and above, including two staff who hold early years qualifications at level 5. The pre-school opens from Monday to Friday, term time only. Sessions are from 8.45am until 12pm and 12.30pm until 3.20pm. Children also have the option of staying for lunch. The pre-school provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Shelly McDougall

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 viewed the provision and discussed the safety and suitability of the premises.
- 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.
- Parents shared their views of the setting with the inspector.

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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