

Inspection of Poplar Pre-School (CIO)

Giddyhorn Lane Pavilion, Poplar Grove, MAIDSTONE, Kent ME16 0DE

Inspection date: 5 December 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

Staff support children's learning and development well. They have implemented highly effective settling-in procedures. This helps staff to get to know children and build strong relationships and bonds with them. As a result, children are happy and excited to come into the pre-school and feel safe as they explore the interesting and engaging environment.

Children develop a good range of independence skills during their time at the pre-school. For example, staff encourage the children to have a go as they learn how to put on their coats ready to go outside to play. Children demonstrate positive behaviour and are learning how to interact and engage with their friends. For instance, they ask a friend to sit next to them at lunchtime. Staff provide children with a wide range of activities to support them in sharing. For example, children particularly enjoy turn-taking games. They practise their hand-eye coordination as they insert toy swords into the barrel. There is great anticipation as the children wait to see if their sword makes the pirate pop out of the top of the barrel.

Staff offer children a wealth of experiences to develop their fine motor skills. For instance, children explore the dough as they kneed and roll it into different shapes. Staff encourage the children to think about the size and shape of the wiggly worms they have made. Staff incorporate mathematical language effectively into children's play.

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

- The manager and staff team are passionate about their role in supporting children and their families. They work extremely well together and have high expectations for all children. The manager provides support for staff through regular supervision and training to help them improve their practice. The manager and staff constantly evaluate the pre-school to ensure they meet the needs of the children. Staff state that they feel extremely supported by the manager.
- The special educational needs coordinators (SENCOs) work in partnership with parents and other agencies. This helps to ensure all children, including children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and children who speak English as an additional language achieve their best possible outcomes. The SENCOs support staff to put in place detailed plans and focused groups to address any developmental concerns. For example, the qualified teachers run groups to boost children speech, language and communication. These help children to develop their social interactions and confidence.
- Staff ask children skilful questions and introduce new vocabulary during conversations. For instance, they encourage children to look at the faces of the

characters in the book to see if they are happy or sad. The staff encourage children to copy the faces and talk about how the characters might be feeling. Staff make good use of activities to help children learn about their emotions and support them to develop their communication and language skills.

- Children enjoy reading books independently as well as engaging in interactive stories with the staff. For example, children retell the story of the gingerbread man using picture cards. The children are very familiar with the story. They quickly find the pictures of the characters in the story that staff have hidden around the outside area. The younger children excitedly join in and follow the older children in the search. However, the older children are quick to find the pictures. As a result, the younger children do not gain the same sense of achievement.
- The staff know the children very well. They make sure that the curriculum has a clear intent for learning. Staff focus on children's interests and stages of development. For instance, they encourage children to explore real-life events through imaginative play. Children make lists and talk about what they are going to buy at the shops. Staff engage effectively in role play with the children. However, at times, staff do not consistently provide a higher level of challenge for the most able children to help further extend their learning.
- The staff and manager have established very secure partnerships with parents. Staff regularly share information with parents about their children's learning and development to keep them informed. They speak with them at drop-off and collection times and encourage them to view and add to their children's online learning records. Parents state that they are very pleased with the help and support they receive from the manager and staff at the pre-school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The manager has a secure knowledge of how to safeguard children. She understands her role in keeping children safe and protecting them from harm. The manager ensures all staff keep their mandatory training up to date. For instance, staff complete online training in relation to child protection. This includes issues such as the 'Prevent' duty and being alert to extreme views and beliefs. Staff understand the importance of whistle-blowing and know who to contact if they were to have a concern. The provider has strong recruitment and vetting procedures in place to ensure all staff 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:

- extend the support for younger children so that they are as fully engaged in activities as their older peers

- build on the curriculum to help extend the most able children's learning further.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY495735
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10308550
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	44
Number of children on roll	63
Name of registered person	Poplar Pre-School (CIO)
Registered person unique reference number	RP909051
Telephone number	01622 763638
Date of previous inspection	22 March 2018

Information about this early years setting

Poplar Pre-School (CIO) registered in 2015. It is located in Allington, Maidstone, Kent. The pre-school is open Monday to Friday, from 9am to 3pm, during term time only. The provider receives funding for the provision of free early education for three- and four-year-old children. They employ 16 members of staff, of whom 11 hold a relevant early years qualification at level 2 or above. Two staff have achieved qualified teacher status.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Sara Garrity

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 the inspector completed a learning walk together of all areas of the pre-school and discussed the early years curriculum.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation of a storytelling activity with the deputy manager.
- The inspector looked at relevant documentation and reviewed accident records and evidence of the suitability of staff working in the pre-school.
- The inspector talked to children about their interests and activities.
- The inspector considered the views of parents through face-to-face discussions and written testimonials.

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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