

Inspection of YMCA Maidstone Pre-school – Tovil

Tovil Community Centre, Barfreston Close, Maidstone ME15 6FG

Inspection date: 7 February 2024

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

The staff know the children well. They plan an engaging environment that focuses on children's interests. Children happily come into the pre-school and quickly settle into their play. They feel safe and secure as they explore a wide variety of activities and resources. For instance, the children skilfully place party invitations into envelopes. They eagerly deliver the letters and wait for staff to read the invitation out to them. Staff make good use of role play to support children in learning about real-life experiences as they develop an interest in literacy.

Children learn the importance of good hygiene routines, such as washing hands before eating. At snack time, staff provide children with opportunities to try new foods. They make positive use of praise to encourage children to have a go and do things for themselves. For instance, children excitedly use chopsticks to eat their noodles. Children enjoy the challenge as they practise their hand-eye coordination and develop their fine motor skills.

Staff provide children with a wealth of opportunities to practise their large motor skills. Children enjoy running around and riding bicycles. They particularly enjoy using large construction resources to build balancing beams in the garden. Staff support the children to take managed risks in their play as the children take turns to walk along the beams.

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

- The manager is dedicated to ensuring children and their families feel valued and included in the setting. Staff work extremely well together and feel very supported at the pre-school. The manager has a clear focus on well-being and ensures staff undertake regular training to help them develop their practice. For example, the acting deputy manager had an opportunity to work alongside the deputy manager before taking over the role.
- Parents are very satisfied with their children's learning experiences at the pre-school. Staff share information through children's online learning records, as well as speaking with parents at drop-off and collection times. Staff have established very positive partnerships with parents.
- Staff have high expectations for children's learning. They use sign language to support inclusivity within their setting. The special educational needs coordinator works closely with parents, staff and other professionals. She ensures that children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language, have focused plans in place. The manager has made good use of additional funding to help develop children's language skills. For instance, staff run focused groups to help boost children's communication skills. This helps all children to reach their full potential.

- Children are extremely excited to come into the pre-school to interact with friends. Some children are very energetic and particularly enjoy running around in the large hall. This has an impact on the noise level in the hall, which can become excessive at times. As a result, some children find it difficult to hear and concentrate on their chosen activity.
- The staff have a clear intent for children's learning. They offer a good range of adult-led and child-focused activities to engage children and develop their curiosity. For instance, staff provide children with a range of different tools and media to explore how colours change. The children are eager to experiment as they make patterns on the paper. However, on occasion, some staff do not give children sufficient time to think about what they wish to say to support their language skills.
- The manager has secure safeguarding policies in place. Staff have a good understanding of their responsibilities concerning protecting children. The manager understands the procedure to follow in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff. This helps to ensure they maintain children's safety and well-being.
- Staff are good role models who provide children with clear rules and boundaries to meet their emotional needs. Children are kind to their friends. They learn to share and take turns. For example, the children share their dough with friends so that they can join in with the activity. Children's behaviour is good and appropriate to their stage of development.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts children's interests first.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- continue to support staff to identify when high levels of noise are impacting on children's learning and take appropriate action to address this
- support staff to recognise when to give children time to think about what they would like to say, to help develop children's learning and communication skills.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY497911
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10312002
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	30
Number of children on roll	38
Name of registered person	Maidstone YMCA
Registered person unique reference number	RP901717
Telephone number	01622 749404
Date of previous inspection	17 April 2018

Information about this early years setting

YMCA Maidstone Pre-school – Tovil registered in 2016. It is one of two settings registered to the provider. The pre-school operates from a community centre in Maidstone, Kent. It is open from Monday to Friday, between 9am and 3pm, during term time only. The provider receives funding to provide early education for children aged two, three and four years. They employ eight members of staff, all of whom hold a relevant early years qualification at level 2 or above.

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 inspector talked to staff at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The manager and inspector completed a learning walk together of all areas of the pre-school and discussed the early years curriculum.
- The inspector observed the quality of education being provided, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact that this was having on children's learning.
- Parents shared their views on the pre-school with the inspector.
- The inspector looked at relevant documentation and reviewed evidence of the suitability of staff working at the pre-school.
- Children spoke to the inspector about what they like to do at pre-school.

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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