

Martlesham Playschool

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector Hazel Meadows

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Type of setting Childcare on non-domestic premises

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

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Description of the setting

Martlesham Playschool was originally established in 1985 and re-registered when it moved to the current premises in November 2010. It operates from purpose built premises within the grounds of Gorseland Primary School, in Martlesham, Suffolk. It is managed by a voluntary management committee, made up of parents of some of the children who attend the pre-school. There is level access to the premises and an accessible toilet is available off the main playroom. Children have access to an enclosed outdoor play area. The premises is also used by an after school club, outside of pre-school opening hours.

The pre-school is registered by Ofsted on the Early Years Register. A maximum of 26 children, none of whom may be under two years, may attend the pre-school at any one time. There are currently 63 children aged from two to five years on roll. Of these, 29 children receive funding for early education.

The group is open Monday to Friday, term time only. Session times are from 9am until 12noon and 12.15pm until 3.15pm. Children are able to bring a packed lunch and stay all day. Children come from the local area and attend for a variety of sessions. The setting supports children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language. The setting provides funded early education for three- and four-year-olds.

The group employs 10 staff, all of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications. The group also employs a part-time administrator. The two playleaders who work a job share. One is trained to level 5 and working towards a BA (Honours) Degree in Early Learning. The other playleader and the majority of the other staff are trained to level 3. The group is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance and receives support from local authority advisory staff.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children are very happy and settle well at this welcoming and stimulating pre-school. Highly committed and competent staff work well as a team to provide an imaginative and exciting variety of play and learning experiences and children are making excellent progress through the Early Years Foundation Stage. Inclusive practice is actively promoted and each child's individuality is embraced and valued. Positive and trusting partnerships are established with parents and others, ensuring children receive consistent support regarding their care, development and learning. Most documentation and procedures are in place and work well in practice to promote children's welfare and safety. Ongoing self-evaluation promotes high quality in all areas and supports continuous development.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To meet the specific requirements of the EYFS, the registered person must:

- keep a written record of complaints and their outcome and ensure records are easily accessible and available for inspection by Ofsted (Safeguarding and promoting children's welfare) 05/10/2011

To further improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- review and improve clarity of the administration of medication records to further promote the good health of children.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Secure processes are in place to protect children from harm. Recruitment procedures are robust and all staff have had Criminal Records Bureau clearance. Staff have all attended safeguarding training and are clear of their responsibilities to protect children. The group has a thorough safeguarding policy, plus local safeguarding contact details for staff to refer to, should they have concerns about a child. The premises are kept secure and staff are watchful of the children and attentive to their safety. Written risk assessments are undertaken for the premises and for outings, which effectively identify and rectify potential hazards, to minimise risks to children. The emergency evacuation procedure is regularly practised and recorded, to ensure it operates swiftly and smoothly.

The highly dedicated staff team are competent, experienced and enthusiastic. They have a commitment to ongoing training and development, to enhance daily practice and professional development. Ongoing reflection, through the evaluation of activities, regular staff meetings and appraisals, contributes greatly to the setting's ability to maintain continuous improvement. Staff are extremely well deployed to enhance children's care, learning and safety. They utilise an exciting variety of activities and good quality resources in imaginative ways, to promote fun and dynamic play and learning experiences for children.

The group has a very positive attitude and approach towards diversity and promotes very good inclusive practice. Staff actively support and include all children, including several with specific health needs. They work very closely with parents, liaising with other childcare or health professionals, if required, to ensure each child receives appropriate support. Their very good knowledge of child development and of individual children enables them to identify early any additional needs a child may have. Their positive approach is well reflected in the resources and activities available.

Comprehensive details are obtained about each child to support their welfare and signed parental consents are obtained to ensure children are cared for according to their parents' wishes. Staff are vigilant to ensure accident and medication records

are maintained but the existing method of obtaining consent and recording administration of medication is disjointed and lacks clarity. All records are securely and confidentially kept and accurately maintained, however, written records of all complaints received are not readily available for inspection on request. Well-written policies have recently been reviewed and updated and are readily available to parents.

Staff establish excellent, trusting partnerships with parents which is conducive to children's welfare and continuity of care. Parents are kept very well informed about their child's progress through frequent discussions with staff and they can review and contribute to their child's learning journey development record at anytime. Their comments and feedback are welcomed and actively sought, both verbally and via a comments box. Parents support the group well and many are actively involved on the pre-school committee. Comments received from parents during the inspection are exceptionally positive. They find staff friendly and approachable and are confident of their competence. Parents state their children are very happy and settled at the playgroup and have made very good progress. They are reassured by how well staff get to know their children as individuals and support them accordingly. They feel well-informed through frequent discussions and newsletters and all parents are familiar with their child's learning journey. The setting endeavours to establish positive links with schools that children are due to attend, to promote continuity of care and to aid smooth transitions for the children. The group receives some support from their local authority advisory staff and from other childcare or health professionals, as required.

The quality and standards of the early years provision and outcomes for children

Children are keen to come into the well-prepared setting and enthusiastically explore the activities available. Within 10 minutes, they are all settled and fully engaged with their chosen activity. Children are fascinated by a mechanical apple corer and peeler and patiently wait their turn to use it. Conversation and hands-on learning are well promoted through this activity as children wash their apples, cut up the slices and compare the length of the peelings. They taste the apple raw and again once it is cooked. Children learn more about the natural world around them as they dig in the garden area, plant seeds and care for plants and are able to sample produce they have grown, such as tomatoes and runner beans. They delight in discovering small mini beasts as they weed the plant containers. Walks to local woods and heath land enable children to experience a broader variety of flora and fauna and gain an appreciation of the natural environment.

Staff enter into children's imaginative play and positively channel their interests and energies. For example, children show a keen interest in dressing-up as pirates and make swords out of large construction. Their interest is supported and extended by staff as they draw treasure maps and pirates together and go on treasure hunts. An initial sticking activity develops into an opportunity to improve scissor skills and attentive staff note which children would benefit from further support. Staff flexibly accommodate particular ideas or requests, for example,

facilitating the making of a 'get well' card for a poorly grandparent. The appealing variety of books encourages children to develop an appreciation of books and they listen attentively as staff tell stories to small groups.

Staff are caring and attentive and get to know the children very well as individuals. Initial observations, plus information gathered from parents verbally and in 'All About Me' booklets, offer staff an insight into each child's individuality and identify starting points in their learning. This helps staff to support children accordingly. Children form open and trusting relationships with staff and one another and many know each other's names. They are developing positive self-esteem and are very confident communicators, freely approaching and talking to staff and visitors. Children's behaviour is very good, as they are well occupied and clear of the reasonable boundaries. Staff are positive role models and treat children with kindness and respect, which helps them feel safe and secure. Children learn to keep themselves safe through clear explanations and reminders.

The experienced and competent staff clearly recognise the importance and benefits of children learning through play. They prepare an inviting and exciting play and learning environment for young children. A stimulating variety of toys and resources offer good levels of challenge and interest for the broad range of ages and abilities of the children present. Activities are seamlessly changed to offer fresh interest and challenge throughout each session. Children have regular opportunities to explore a wide variety of media and materials, including glitter play dough, paint, sand and water. Children have time to explore the resources available and concentrate for considerable periods at activities which engage them, for example, a child is enthralled by the shaving foam.

Staff have established a very effective method of monitoring children's progress towards the early learning goals using individual learning journey development records. Each child has a key person and regular observations are utilised very well to identify the child's next step and to inform weekly planning, which aids children's individual progression.

Children are learning good hygiene practice through regular routines and explanations from staff. They independently wash their hands prior any food activities and after toileting. Specific aprons are worn by the children when handling food. The rolling snack time is a sociable experience for the children. They gain skills and independence, pouring their own milk and most remember to clear their used plates away when they have finished. They benefit from an excellent variety of healthy and nutritious snacks, promoting their understanding of healthy eating. Children can freely access the outdoor area, offering daily opportunities for fresh air and exercise, promoting a healthy lifestyle. They are becoming increasing competent and confident with balancing on the stepping stones and stilts and are developing good coordination with the ride on toys. Children are able to rest or sleep in the cosy book area should they wish to.

Annex A: record of inspection judgements

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	2

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	1
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding	2
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	2
The effectiveness of partnerships	2
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	1

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	1
The extent to which children feel safe	1
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	1
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	1

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