

Wix & Wrabness Pre-school

Inspection report for early years provision

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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

Wix and Wrabness Pre-school was registered in 1999. It operates from a double demountable activity room in the grounds of Wix and Wrabness Primary School in the village of Wix in Essex. The pre-school has two secure outdoor play areas, one of which is covered to provide shelter in wet or sunny weather. By arrangement it also has use of some of the school's other facilities, including a playing field. Children come from the local and surrounding areas. A maximum of 36 children aged two to under eight years may attend the pre-school at any one time. There are currently 18 children on roll, of whom eight were present at the time of the inspection. All were in the early years age group. The pre-school is open from 7:30am until 8:45am for a breakfast club, 8:45am until 11:15am for sessional care, 11:30am until 12:30pm for a lunch club and 12:30pm until 3:00pm for the afternoon session, or alternatively, 7:30am until 3:00pm for full day care. It is open in school term times only. The pre-school receives some government funding for early education. It supports children with learning difficulties or disabilities, and has appropriate access for them. It also welcomes children who speak English as an additional language, although there are none on roll at present. It has links with a range of support agencies, and has effective links with its adjacent school. Six staff work with the children. Five, including the manager, hold an early years qualification. The pre-school receives support from the local authority and the Pre-School Learning Alliance. It is on the Early Years Register.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

The setting is a safe, welcoming and inclusive pre-school. The staff see all children as individuals, with their own needs and interests, and they provide a good variety of engaging and purposeful activity for them. Consequently children enjoy their time in the pre-school, and make a strong start to their education. The pre-school has improved considerably since its last inspection, and is well placed to continue improving in the future.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- extend the range of assessment observations, in order to provide a better balanced view of children's achievements across the full programme of activity.
- reorganise and re-equip the small room with toilet and changing facilities, for the youngest children, to improve its fitness for purpose.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Staff rightly see their top priority as ensuring the children's safety. The suitability of adults working in the pre-school, or applying to work there, is carefully checked. The activity rooms and the outdoor play areas are well secured from intrusion, or from children slipping away unseen. Staff hold regular fire drills, and have well-displayed emergency evacuation plans in case of emergencies. They keep fire exits uncluttered. Every year they conduct a full health and safety audit of the accommodation and the site itself to make sure there are no hazards to put children at risk. This is in addition to their daily checks on the condition of equipment, furniture and facilities. They have suitably strict procedures for managing circumstances where a child might not be met at the right time, or might be collected by an unrecognised adult. All staff have had training in child protection and first aid. They are alert to any indications of possible mistreatment, and know what action to take in this event.

This is a very well-led pre-school. The recently appointed manager is experienced in work with children in the early years age group, and leads her team very well. They share her determination to make the provision even better than it is already. They show a willingness to undertake additional training to enhance their skills and qualifications. They have worked very effectively on a new process of self-review. This has involved a systematic evaluation of the pre-school's strengths and weaknesses, leading to the identification of key priorities for future improvement. As a result they intend to work towards greater parent involvement, and to improve the use they make of outside areas. They are also rightly keen to improve the facilities in the small room used when the youngest children need changing.

Good leadership has resulted in a greatly improved, and improving, programme of activities for the children. Because these are so well tailored to their needs and interests, the children become very absorbed in them. They play happily, learn quickly and achieve well.

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

Children come cheerfully to the pre-school, and settle readily to the activities set up for them. They enjoy drawing and mark-making as the first stage in writing, playing with construction toys, or feeling a table of natural and man-made objects with different textures. Some like to go outside to play on the tricycles, or to experiment on rolling a ball down an incline to see how far it will go. Adults sit or play alongside the children in self-chosen activities, and show considerable skill in chatting informally to them in ways that move their learning forward without taking the initiative away from them.

Additionally there are new activities, initiated by adults either to awaken fresh interests or to provide the next steps in learning for a particular group of children. They make Mother's Day hearts from salt dough, and are excited by the feel of the

shaving foam their water tray is filled with. They enjoy spooning dry rice into small plastic beakers, learning ideas of "more" and "less", "full" and "empty", "heavy" and "light". They have planted iris bulbs in the small greenhouse in their room, and seen how the shoots break through the soil. A wall display shows a gallery of exceptionally skilled self-portraits, painted using mirrors to see themselves. Recently they have learned about religious festivals from different faith communities. This richness of activity extends their understanding of the world around them, while at the same time helping them improve their skills in language, counting, and fine manipulation.

The children have a very good understanding of why they should keep their hands clean and they usually wash without reminding. They enjoy the healthy snacks the pre-school provides, and enjoy using their surplus energy on the apparatus in the outside area. They behave very well. They are calm and sensible as they move around the facilities, and they use tools and equipment safely. Children feel and act very safely. They have a warm and trusting relationship with the staff of the pre-school. They are keen to learn and confident to try out new ideas.

Planning is good, and ensures children receive a balanced provision of learning opportunity across the range required for the early years age group. Staff make regular observations of how children respond to these activities. These observations help them plan appropriate next steps in learning, and over time provide a valuable picture of the progress the children make. Observations focus heavily on the development of important personal and social skills such as independence, self-confidence, and sociability. Children's achievements in these areas are very clear. However, relatively few observations record children's progress in other aspects, such as communication and numeracy skills, and in these aspects the picture is less sharp. Overall, the positive attitudes, and the skills children acquire in the pre-school will be very useful to them in their future education.

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

How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	2
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	2

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	2
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	2
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	2

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