

# Matlock Pre-School Playgroup

**Unique reference number (URN):** 2740080

**Address:** 205 Smedley Street, Matlock, DE4 3JD



**Type:** Childcare on non-domestic premises

**Registered with Ofsted:** 03/08/2023

**Registers:** EYR

**Registered person:** Matlock Pre-School Playgroup Association

## Inspection report: 20 November 2025

Exceptional	
Strong standard	
Expected standard	
Needs attention	
Urgent improvement	

### Safeguarding standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, children are made safer and feel safe.

## How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect settings for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- Met: The setting has an open and positive culture of safeguarding.
- Not met: The setting has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

## Strong standard ●

### Achievement

Strong standard ●

Leaders and staff have a deep understanding of any special educational needs and/or disabilities or any other barriers to learning that children may have. This is due to high levels of engagement with parents and secure systems in place to gather information and track children's progress. Staff ensure that children make progress across all areas of learning. They use routines and experiences to provide children with the essential knowledge and skills they need in readiness for starting school. Developing children's speech and language is a high priority for staff, and children make rapid progress with their communication skills.

Staff work closely with other professionals and signpost parents to additional support to ensure that children get the help they need. This supports all children to make secure progress. Staff make links with other settings that children attend. They plan to share children's assessments and next steps in learning. This collaborative approach helps children to reach their full potential.

### Behaviour, attitudes and establishing routines

Strong standard ●

Children behave exceptionally well. Leaders and staff model respectful interactions to help children understand the expectations for behaviour. They know about the individual needs of children and ensure that every child is included and celebrated. Children take pride in doing things for themselves and develop their sense of responsibility well. For example, when the sand timer runs out, children know to stop their play and tidy away the resources. Children choose what they would like to tidy up, and staff consistently offer praise and encourage teamwork. This develops children's confidence and positive self-esteem.

Staff use a visual timetable display to support children's understanding of what is happening next and to embed routines. This is particularly helpful for younger children. Staff are excellent role models and use their interactions with children to demonstrate wanted behaviour. For instance, when children use their feet to roll trucks down a slope, staff show children to use their hands to push the trucks. Children observe and copy staff's actions.

Children show increasing levels of independence. For instance, they wash their hands before eating, pour their own drinks and serve their snack. Children have impeccable manners and use 'please' and 'thank you' without prompting. Leaders and staff follow the

setting's attendance policy when children are absent. They are mindful of how gaps in attendance can impact children's learning and wellbeing.

## Children's welfare and wellbeing

Strong standard 

Leaders consistently prioritise children's welfare and wellbeing, placing it at the heart of the setting's ethos and daily practice. Children thrive within the secure attachments of their key person. They enjoy cuddles with staff and sit close while sharing stories and singing songs. Relationships between staff and children are warm and trusting. Parents value how quickly children settle and feel reassured that they are cared for in a safe environment.

Staff sensitively help children to learn about their emotions and build strategies that support them to gain self-awareness and with how to self-regulate. They ensure that children have daily opportunities for outdoor play and exercise. Staff provide a broad range of equipment that helps stimulate children to be physically active. For example, when children work hard digging in the sand pit, staff encourage them to feel their heartbeat as they breathe faster.

Embedded and well-structured routines help children to develop healthy habits and emotional wellbeing. Staff provide children with healthy snacks and fresh drinking water or milk. Children show they are developing effective hygiene practices, for example washing their hands at appropriate times. Younger children's care needs are handled sensitively by staff. For instance, they gently ask children before changing their nappy and help them to manage their emotions effectively.

## Inclusion

Strong standard 

Leaders have a clear and accurate understanding of the community they serve. They are knowledgeable about the needs of individual families and quickly identify any potential barriers to children's learning. Staff acquire relevant skills to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who may face other barriers to their learning. For example, staff complete training to support children's behaviour. They use this learned knowledge to implement strategies to help children manage their own behaviour and feelings.

Leaders and staff take action to reduce barriers through inclusive practice. For instance, visual timetables are provided to support children with communication skills and their emotional needs. Leaders promptly recognise any gaps in children's learning and development and liaise with parents and external agencies to create targeted support plans. Furthermore, they access additional funding to progress children's learning further. For example, staff have created a calming space for children to use. They share books about feelings to help them learn to regulate their emotions.

Parents have high praise for the staff who work at the setting. They eagerly share information about the rapid progress their children make, particularly with their social interactions and communication development.

## Leadership and governance

Strong standard 

Leaders strive to provide high standards of education and care for all children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who may face other barriers to their learning. They ensure that additional funding is used in the best interests of children to support their wellbeing and development.

Leaders demonstrate a deep understanding of the setting's strengths and areas for development. Leaders create a culture of continuous improvement by involving all staff to share ideas to help children to achieve and thrive. Staff report they feel valued and that their wellbeing is a priority for leaders. Leaders monitor staff performance through regular supervision, peer observations and meetings. They reflect on their own professional development to ensure that they have the expertise to support staff to deliver a high-quality childcare provision.

Parents comment they are delighted with the progress their children are making, such as in social interactions, using their manners and taking turns. They generally know their children's next stage of learning and comment that staff share ideas for activities they can do at home to support children's learning further. Leaders are acutely aware of this area for further development and are already taking steps to ensure that all parents have comprehensive information about their child's learning.

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## Expected standard

### Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders ensure that children benefit from a well-planned curriculum and identify any areas for improvement. Staff complete ongoing assessments for children from their starting points. This celebrates where children are making progress and helps staff recognise any children who begin to fall behind. Typically, staff create meaningful learning experiences for children. For instance, they spark children's curiosity as they gather around a frozen tray of ice. Staff ask children thought-provoking questions on how they will release the frozen toy insects. Children use different tools to break the ice and squeal with excitement as they set them free. Staff facilitate children's learning through discussion about how the warmth from the sun and their hands melt the ice. These high-quality interactions are not consistent. For example, during some activities, children show an interest in naming colours and counting. Staff do not consistently adapt their teaching methods to support children's learning further.

Children enjoy spending time in the outdoor area. They develop their large-muscle skills by using spades to dig in the sand pit and use their hand-eye coordination to fill up buckets.

Staff give children ample opportunities to develop their speech and language. Children enthusiastically join in with song time and confidently make suggestions about what they want to sing. Staff support children's engagement and turn taking by using props that link to their chosen nursery rhymes. Furthermore, staff use sign language to support children's

communication skills. Children start to use familiar signs during snack time and singing. As a result, children are becoming confident communicators.

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## **What it's like to be a child at this setting**

Children happily arrive at the setting and separate from their parents or carers with confidence. They get ready to start their day by following the setting's established morning routines. Children independently hang up their belongings and wash their hands. Staff are excited for children to arrive and make them feel extremely welcome. Children quickly engage in their play, seeking out their key person and friends to interact with and share experiences. Staff plan and provide settling-in sessions that meet the individual needs of children who are new to the setting. They give them time to adapt to their new environment, helping them to feel safe and secure. Staff are very responsive to children's needs. They create a calm, homely atmosphere for them to thrive.

Leaders and staff ensure that children's welfare is always a priority. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities or those who may face other barriers to their learning receive targeted support. Staff consistently work with parents and other professionals to ensure that children receive the help they need to make progress from their starting points. They go above and beyond to ensure that children receive a continuous curriculum. For example, staff plan home visits to children who are unable to attend the setting for a length of time to continue their learning at home.

Staff provide children with a range of stimulating experiences to develop their physical skills during outdoor play. For instance, children build on their core strength and agility as they explore the outside space with confidence. Staff encourage children to coordinate their bodies to move over climbing equipment, and they demonstrate how to safely manoeuvre over stepping stones. Children practise and persevere with these new skills by stretching their legs and using their arms to help them balance. This supports children to develop 'can-do' attitudes.

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## **Next steps**

- The provider should strengthen staff's ability to adapt teaching during activities to maximise learning opportunities for children.
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## About this inspection

The inspector spoke with the manager, special educational needs coordinator, practitioners and parents during the inspection.

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.

A quality assurance visit by an additional inspector was carried out at this inspection.

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### Inspector:

Kelly Langley

## About this setting

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### Address:

205 Smedley Street  
Matlock  
DE4 3JD

**Type:** Childcare on non-domestic premises

**Registration date:** 03/08/2023

**Registered person:** Matlock Pre-School Playgroup Association


**Register(s):** EYR

**Operating hours:** Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday : 09:00 - 12:00

**Local authority:** Derbyshire

# Facts and figures used on inspection

This data was available to the inspector at the time of the inspection.

 This data is from 20 November 2025

## Children numbers

Age range of children at the time of inspection

**1 to 3**

Total number of places

**16**

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## Our grades explained

**Exceptional** 

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other settings can learn from it.

**Strong standard** 

The setting reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

**Expected standard** 

The setting is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

**Needs attention** 

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

**Urgent improvement** 

The setting needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

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