

Castle Hill Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	110024
Inspection date	22/11/2010
Inspector	Jameel Hassan

Setting address	Fort Hill School, Kenilworth Road, Basingstoke, Hampshire, RG23 8JQ
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Telephone number	01256 355 719
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Email

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*.

The provider must provide a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must provide a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Childcare (Inspection) Regulations 2008 regulations 9 and 10).

The setting also makes provision for children older than the early years age group which is registered on the voluntary and/or compulsory part(s) of the Childcare Register. This report does not include an evaluation of that provision, but a comment about compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Register is included in Annex B.

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Description of the setting

Castle Hill Pre-School opened in 1990 and operates from two rooms; a classroom and portacabin within the site of Fort Hill Community School, in Winklebury, near Basingstoke. The setting is registered on the Early Years Register and on the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. It is managed by a voluntary management committee. Children attend from the local and surrounding areas.

The setting is registered to provide care for a maximum of 47 children aged two to five years at any one time. There are currently 39 children on roll. Of these, 29 children receive nursery education funding. Children can attend for a variety of sessions or for the whole day. The setting is able to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and for whom English is an additional language.

The pre-school is open each week day from 9.15am to 3.00pm term time only. The group operates an optional lunch club everyday. The setting employs eight staff, including the manager, to work with the children. Of these, four staff hold an early years qualification to National Vocational Qualification at level two or above. The pre-school receives support and advice from the local authority.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

The children at Castle Hill Pre-School are very settled, happy and confident. The staff work closely with parents and carers to meet the children's individual learning and welfare needs. Staff understand that each child is unique and has individual needs. All children are welcomed and valued whatever their background and needs, although there are few planned opportunities for children to develop an understanding of diversity. Children make good progress in their learning and development. The manager is very aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the setting and is continuously planning for improvement. The capacity for future improvement is good.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- improve the tracking of progress for groups of children in order to identify where children are making good progress and to plan for the next steps in their development
- promote positive attitudes to diversity through activities that encourage children to talk about similarities and differences and the reasons for these.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The safeguarding procedures of the setting comply with statutory requirements. Written procedures help to protect children within the pre-school and promote their well-being. Extensive checks are carried out to ensure that staff are suitable to work with children. Staff have a clear understanding of the provision's safeguarding policies and the procedures to be followed if they have concerns about a child in their care.

The setting has an excellent comprehensive self-evaluation document where all staff, and parents and carers have been involved in its input. In addition, the results from questionnaires to parents and carers, and discussions with the children, contribute to self-evaluation. It is reflective of the setting's practice and has identified its strengths and weaknesses. The management of the setting has addressed the weaknesses highlighted, such as being involved in more local community activities such as local fetes and charitable events. They have also addressed, from the previous inspection, giving parents and carers hints and tips to help children make progress in their learning and development. This includes taking the children for a walk in a park and seeing the leaves that are changing as part of the Autumn season or ways to encourage children to count at home. Excellent partnerships with parents and carers mean that staff have a good knowledge of each child's needs and effective partnership working with others secures continuity of care for children.

The staff are well qualified. They are encouraged to regularly update their skills and knowledge so that they can promote good outcomes for children. Since the last inspection, several members of staff have gained further qualifications which exceed the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. The setting is extremely well resourced. Children have good access to all the toys and choose those they wish to play with. As a result, this helps them to become successful independent learners.

The pre-school benefits from an enthusiastic manager who is genuinely embracing the spirit and essence of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Children's safety is promoted extremely well as the pre-school has very effective safeguarding procedures. Checks are carried out to ensure that all staff are suitable to work with children. A mobile-phone policy is in place where adults cannot use them when children are in the setting. Regular daily checks are recorded and risk assessments for all activities ensure that hazards are minimised.

Parents and carers are well informed about their child's progress. They are informed of the topics and themes the pre-school has planned for that term. Parents and carers are given ideas on how to support their child at home. They have access to their children's learning journeys, which show children's progress, and are encouraged to look at them each day. These are kept up to date and parents and carers are encouraged to contribute to the learning journey if they see something that their child has achieved that day. There are good transition arrangements with some local schools who benefit from the setting's accurate

assessment of the individual children and the information passed on.

Staff are involved in planning good learning opportunities for the children, particularly for those for whom they are the key person. Appropriate planning is in place to support individual children in their care to help them make good progress in their next stage of learning. However, the setting does not track the progress of groups of children in order to identify strengths and weaknesses and trends from year to year. Since the last inspection, the setting has responded to the four previous recommendations. All these have been met to further improve outcomes for children.

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

Children feel safe and secure in the pre-school and quickly develop a strong sense of belonging. There is good interaction between the children and their key person, and some of the older children have built very strong friendships with each other. Good hygiene practices are embedded as children make their way to wash their hands after they have been outside or to the toilet, without being prompted. If children have any special dietary requirements, these are noted carefully and observed. Allergies are taken seriously and staff have an excellent traffic light system of showing if a child has an allergy or a preference for food or a cultural requirement so all staff are aware. Children always have access to drinking water bottles.

Children develop successfully some of the skills they will need for the future, for example developing their own ideas on the creative area based on the current topic of 'Seasons' and using language specific to the topic, such as 'leave trees, bark, snail and shell.' Children were using numbers and pointing to numbers and saying and showing them with their fingers accurately. Staff plan many very interesting and age-appropriate activities for the children. Children make good progress in communication, language and literacy, with some children very good at expressing their ideas verbally.

During the inspection, good provision was made for children's learning, such as malleable materials, sand both inside and outside, discovery materials, small-world activities and a role play area, which was a hospital, with 'a doctor' sorting out the wounded and ill, including one member of staff. Children use information and communication technology successfully as an everyday resource, including cameras and a laptop computer. Through their topics and planned activities, children learn successfully about their local community and have taken a trip to the local shops and Hampton Court. However, opportunities for children to explore similarities and differences to develop a wider understanding of the diverse society in which they live are not routinely planned for.

Good daily practice, such as on-going explanations from staff, reinforces children's understanding of safety issues. For example, they are reminded to walk carefully indoors as they move to going to play outside, and putting coats on when it is cold. Despite the difficulties of organising free-flow activities between indoors and

outdoors because of the layout of the setting, great strides have been taken to overcome this barrier to children's learning. Children have plenty of opportunity to go out in all weathers and plan their own activities. During the inspection, a group of children were outside building bridges and testing their strength with bikes and cars to see if they were the appropriate width and strength. Open-ended questions were being used effectively by staff to see if their ideas could be developed further to extend their learning.

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	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
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	1
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	2
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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	2
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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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Annex B: the Childcare Register

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are:	Met
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The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are:	Met
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