

# The Castle Kindergarten

Inspection report for early years provision

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**Inspector** Alexandra Morgan

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**Type of setting** Childcare - Non-Domestic

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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**

The Castle Kindergarten was registered in 1994. It operates from a multi-roomed single storey building in Wimbledon, close to Dundonald Park in the London borough of Merton. The kindergarten receives funding to provide free early education to children aged three and four years. It is registered on the Early Years Register. The kindergarten is open each weekday from 9.15am to 12.15 pm and each afternoon from 12.45 pm to 3.45 pm, during term time only. A maximum of 43 children in the early years age group, of whom none may be under two years, may attend at any one time. There are currently 69 children aged two years and six months to four years on roll. The kindergarten supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children learning English as an additional language. There are 13 members of staff, of whom 10 hold relevant early years qualifications, including two with Qualified Teacher Status.

## **The overall effectiveness of the early years provision**

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

The kindergarten offers a superbly welcoming and inclusive environment for children. Robust procedures and efficient systems, implemented by inspiring staff, are highly effective in promoting children's welfare, learning and development. Overall, children have excellent opportunities to develop their independence skills through a wealth of stimulating play experiences. The partnerships with parents and external agencies are a key strength to support meeting all children's needs, together with any other additional identified needs. The management team is extremely proactive in driving improvement and they have addressed all recommendations from the last inspection thoroughly and successfully. Staff continually evaluate all areas of their practice successfully and maximise opportunities to further improve the outcomes for all children.

## **What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?**

To further improve the high quality early years provision the registered person should consider:

- extending children's independence and contribution to nursery life further by using their developing skills more during the daily routines.

## **The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision**

Staff are extremely vigilant and have an excellent understanding of local

safeguarding procedures, so children are very well protected. Robust recruitment and vetting procedures mean that adults caring for children are suitable to work with them. Staff make very effective use of detailed and thorough risk assessments to support them in checking that the areas used by the children are safe. This means that children are able to move safely and freely around the kindergarten both indoors and outdoors.

The environment is very well organised and accessible, with a plentiful range of high quality resources. Supported by highly skilled staff, children thrive and make excellent progress. Staff are extremely knowledgeable of the Early Years Foundation Stage and use this expertly to extend the children's learning and support each child exceptionally well. Records clearly identify children's starting points and future learning, illustrated by a wealth of photographic evidence. The kindergarten actively embraces equality and diversity. They are fully inclusive welcoming all families, helping new children to settle quickly. Staff gather extensive information to ensure an excellent provision for children with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language. Staff integrate children extremely well and are very successful in taking steps to close identified gaps in their achievements. Consequently, the outcomes for all children are extremely positive and their development in relation to their starting points is excellent.

The staff team, parents and children all contribute to the kindergarten's highly reflective self-evaluation, which takes account of all aspects of the provision. The management and staff share high expectations and set high standards rooted across all areas of practice. The views of parents and children are gathered and considered through using questionnaires and regular consultation.

Partnerships with parents and carers are excellent. Parents are full of praise for the staff. The excellent exchange of information means parents, carers and staff are all kept extremely well informed about every aspect of children's development and well-being. This means that parents and carers are highly involved in their children's learning. For example, staff provide parents with purposeful information on display boards inside the kindergarten and encourage parents to share their professional skills with the children. Relationships with other professionals and external agencies involved with the children are very well established and highly effective. These partnerships contribute strongly to supporting children's ongoing welfare and learning.

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

Children settle extremely well and thrive in the homely and dynamic learning environment. They thoroughly enjoy taking part in a varied range of worthwhile and stimulating activities both indoors and outdoors. Staff skillfully extend children's language and communication through meaningful shared discussion. For example, staff introduce new vocabulary as children delight in moulding clay to create their own dinosaur figure. Children develop an excellent understanding that text carries meaning through the highly effective use of vibrant wall displays and an extensive library.

Children feel valued and become highly inquisitive and active learners through the

natural ability of staff to engage positively with them. Excellent observations enable staff to meet children's individual needs and interests successfully, through an extensive knowledge of their key children. They talk in detail about what these children can do and how they plan to help them progress.

Children have impressive access to information and communication technology. This contributes significantly in helping children acquire and apply appropriate skills for their future lives. For example, they are extremely competent in using digital cameras to record and share their experiences. Children's natural curiosity in living things is highly stimulated by visits from the 'animal farm'. Regular visits to the park and post office provide highly stimulating opportunities for the children to identify and learn about different features of the community.

Children develop their numeracy skills through a rich range of practical activities. For example, at registration time they count the children present and identify those that are absent. Children develop an excellent knowledge and understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle. Through daily fresh air and exercise, they gain an understanding of the changes that happen to their bodies when they are active.

Children have an excellent awareness of healthy eating. They pour their own drinks and make choices from the nutritious snacks provided by parents. Staff do not capitalize on all opportunities to encourage children's independence, however, such as encouraging them to help prepare their own snacks. Children are developing a highly impressive understanding of the importance of personal hygiene. Staff embed this practice by actively encouraging children to wash their hands before eating and after going to the toilet.

Staff's warm and purposeful interaction nurtures children's emotional well-being exceptionally well. They apply clear, consistent boundaries and consequently children's behaviour is exemplary. Many children play co-operatively, taking turns, and demonstrating respect for each other's differences. Children gain an excellent understanding of other cultures through using a range of role-play resources and books. They display a strong sense of belonging to the kindergarten. For example, they carefully help to tidy away at the end of the session, supported enthusiastically by staff.

Children are very confident and competent in communicating their thoughts. They show a mature response to taking responsibility for their own and others' safety. During cooking activities they listen carefully and adhere closely to the instructions of staff. They regularly practice the emergency evacuation procedures and safely use a range of challenging resources, supported by exceedingly attentive staff.

## 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

<b>How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?</b>	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	1

### The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

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

### The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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### Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

<b>Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	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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