

# Cobnuts Steiner Kindergarten

9 Gatland Lane, Maidstone, Kent, ME16 8PJ

## Inspection date

03/10/2014

Previous inspection date

03/02/2014

## The quality and standards of the early years provision

**This inspection:**

2

Previous inspection:

4

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend 2

The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children 2

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision 2

## The quality and standards of the early years provision

### This provision is good

- Staff have a well-established key-person system in place and good relationships help to ensure that children feel safe and secure.
- Staff have an effective system in place to monitor, assess and plan for the individual needs of all children.
- Staff develop effective strategies to communicate closely with, include and value all parents, meaning that they maintain a strong relationship.
- Safeguarding is a priority within the setting, which means that children remain safe.
- Staff role model good behaviour and manners effectively, which helps to support children to develop a clear understanding of rules and boundaries.

### It is not yet outstanding because

- Staff occasionally miss opportunities during snack times to further develop children's independence.
- The organisation of changes in routine is not always fully effective in ensuring that children remain fully engaged during these times.

## **Information about this inspection**

Inspections of registered early years provision are:

- scheduled at least once in every inspection cycle – the current cycle ends on 31 July 2016
- scheduled more frequently where Ofsted identifies a need to do so, for example where provision was previously judged inadequate
- brought forward in the inspection cycle where Ofsted has received information that suggests the provision may not be meeting the legal requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage or where assessment of the provision identifies a need for early inspection
- prioritised where we have received information that the provision is not meeting the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and which suggests children may not be safe
- scheduled at the completion of an investigation into failure to comply with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The provision is also registered on the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. This report includes a judgment about compliance with the requirements of that register.

## **Inspection activities**

- The inspector viewed the areas of the nursery that children use.
- The inspector observed staff interacting with the children.
- The inspector sampled written documentation, including children's progress reports, policies and procedures.
- The inspector spoke to children, gathered parents' views and spoke in depth with staff.

## **Inspector**

Kelly Hawkins

## Full report

### Information about the setting

Cobnuts Steiner Kindergarten is a committee-run kindergarten, which registered in 2005. The kindergarten operates from one main room on the ground floor in a converted house in the Maidstone area of Kent. It is open for four days a week during school term time from 9.30 am to 13.00pm. All children have access to an enclosed outdoor play area. The kindergarten is registered on the Early Years Register and on both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. There are currently eight children on roll. It receives funding for three- and four-years-old. The nursery receives support from the local authority. There are two members of staff and both hold an appropriate early years qualification. The kindergarten supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who are learning English as an additional language. The kindergarten operates in line with the Steiner Waldorf educational philosophy. It has been granted some specific exemption/ modification to elements of the learning and development requirements of the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage.

### What the setting needs to do to improve further

#### To further improve the quality of the early years provision the provider should:

- enhance the opportunities for children to further develop independence during snack times
- review the organisation of changes in routine throughout the day, ensuring children remain fully engaged.

### Inspection judgements

#### How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend

Staff show a good understanding towards promoting children's learning and development, that they are not exempt from, through detailed assessment and planning. Staff are a dedicated and experienced team and demonstrate a good knowledge of the Steiner approach. Staff provide a vast range of open-ended and natural activities and experiences, which are accessible to children in both the indoor and outdoor area on a daily basis. For example, children accessed dolls to nurture during imaginative play, planting seeds, preparing baking activities and climbing trees. Staff calmly support children in the stimulating environments and they encourage them to make independent choices in their play. This enables children to become curious as they explore and actively learn.

Staff plan achievable and challenging next steps for all children based upon their interests,

and staff's daily observations and evaluation meetings. Staff accurately record and track children's progress to enable them to clearly and promptly identify any gaps in learning. As a result, all children make good progress. Staff plan effectively to extend children's learning and engagement. For example, staff enthusiastically tell a well-known story about a growing pumpkin. Staff use props, songs and materials to bring the story to life and extend children's imaginations through tones of voices, senses and actions. Staff liaise closely with parents to obtain general information regarding new children's interests, routines, needs and starting points. They gather this through initial observations and home visits, which helps to ensure that they meet children's needs from the start.

Staff develop strong relationships with parents and outside professionals and good strategies are in place to maintain continuity of care for all children. Staff have regular meetings with parents to share children's progress regarding learning and individual needs. Parents take an active role in their children's development. For example, they attend stay and play sessions and are invited in to take part in craft mornings. This enables the staff to share ideas for developing areas of learning with parents. Staff invite parents to take the learning journals home on a regular basis and add their own comments about what their children like to do at home and share news. Staff provide a consistency of care and an accurate overview of children's learning and development. Parents comment that they are well informed about children's progress, and state 'I feel very well informed, I have daily access to information, we have good dialogue. I feel staff are meeting the needs of my child, and they are well adhered for with opportunity and space'.

Staff provide a wide range of natural resources and experiences, both in the indoor and outdoor learning environments. These experiences stimulate and motivate all children, helping them to make good progress. For example, children are encouraged to use their imagination in the garden building cafes, and making cheese cakes using mud and water, making sand castles and exploring the nature around them as they climb trees. Staff provide children with good opportunities to use a variety of materials to experiment with marks. For example, children use chinks, sand, water and digging equipment on a daily basis. This develops their imagination and early writing skills and to support the development of small muscles and hand-eye co-ordination. Children access the secure outdoor area daily to enjoy fresh air and exercise. The garden is spacious and encourages children to explore the outdoor environment, where they water their growing plants and make mud pies. Staff support children to develop control and coordination of their bodies. Staff are well deployed in all areas of the setting, meaning the child-to-adult ratio is maintained at all times and children receive good levels of supervision.

Staff interact effectively when children approach them or additional support is needed using high quality levels of communication with children to support their language development during play. Children's thinking is naturally challenged and staff develop their problem-solving skills with stimulating and open-ended resources and opportunities. Staff consistently and effectively use facial expression, body language, eye contact and talk to the children. This successfully extends all children's language and communication skills, regardless of the children's ability.

### **The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children**

The dedicated staff team take into account children's specific needs and interests to meet their needs, whilst demonstrating a good balance of the Steiner approach. The key-person system is well-established and as a result, children develop strong and trusting relationships. Children demonstrate a sense of belonging as well as feeling safe and secure. The key-person system effectively supports children during periods of change such as, settling-in times. However, there are occasionally times in the day when the organisation of the routine does not fully engage all children. Staff use consistent praise and positive reinforcement, meaning that children demonstrate good behaviour. For example, children actively use the 'Golden Rules' and manage behaviour well, in an independent manner.

Staff plan activities on a daily basis to cover all areas of development effectively. For example, children learn about keeping their bodies healthy as they discuss healthy snack options and have free access to water. Children independently and confidently wash their hands before snack and put on their wet weather suits and wellington boots to access the outdoor areas. Staff encourage children to help each other at snack, independently giving out snacks and pouring their friends drinks. However, during snack times staff sometimes miss opportunities to further develop their independence and self-care skills.

Staff supervise children to encourage awareness of using equipment safely, such as knives for cutting fruit during a cooking preparation activity, where staff are good role models. They sit with the children during activities such as cutting, planting and sanding and provide subtle and calm support. Children comment that 'it's a wonderful time playing out here, we've been so busy'. During these times, children mirror their positive language and behaviour. As a result, children develop good opportunities to develop language and social skills, demonstrate good behaviour. This supports children as they move onto the next stage in their learning or onto school.

All staff give high priority to safeguarding. Thorough daily and long-term risk assessments of the learning environments and activities, are effectively in place and are regularly reviewed and evaluated. This helps to ensure that all play areas are safe and secure. Staff are well deployed throughout the setting and all staff hold a relevant first-aid qualification helping to ensure the safety of all children. Staff support children of all ages to identify and manage risks to help keep themselves and others safe. For example, children regularly participate in fire evacuation drills developing their understanding and confidence to keep themselves out of danger in an emergency situation.

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

Management follow detailed systems to ensure the safe recruitment of passionate, dedicated and experienced staff. A thorough induction system is in place and the management team review policies detail. As a key part of the induction process they discuss the safeguarding process in detail. As a result, staff demonstrate good knowledge

and understanding of the importance of the nursery's policies. Staff are particularly confident of policies, procedures and points of contacts in relation to safeguarding, ensuring that all children remain safe.

The management team has a good knowledge of the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage, however also establishes a good balance with regards to the exemptions and the Steiner approach. Staff effectively support children in an individual way, meeting their needs. The management team regularly observe and monitor staff members practice to identify areas of focus regarding professional development. Staff participate in daily evaluation meetings, Steiner training forums and conferences and all staff undertake supervision sessions. Management routinely review children's learning journals to ensure accurate planning and tracking of children's progress. This enables them to monitor the educational programmes effectively and highlight any potential gaps in differing groups of children.

Management include all staff and parents in identifying areas of improvement to continue to plan to develop upon. The share and value others' views through effective use of meetings, emails, observations and discussions with the parents committee. Staff have effective strategies in place demonstrating that they are dedicated and passionate to continue to make positive improvements. For example, management and staff have identified the importance of the indoor learning environment, as the seasons are due to change. They have a clear action plan in place to further develop the opportunities within the indoor environment.

Staff maintain positive relationships with other professionals including the local Early Years support officer, other settings practitioners, receiving schools, and speech and language therapists. Staff provide a good support system and an accurate way to share information, establishing a consistency of care for all children. Staff use well thought through and embedded strategies to support children with special educational needs and/or English as an additional language. For example, they use visual prompts, one to one meetings and share activities and information between the setting, home and other professionals. As a result, children with additional needs and English as an additional language make good progress. Staff offer a high level of reassurance and support to all parents and children, resulting in parents speaking highly of the nursery. They comment that 'I am extremely happy with the alternative childcare provision, my child learns whilst playing, its home from home for us and my child flourishes and their spark is nurtured which I find invaluable'.

### **The Childcare Register**

The requirements for the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are	<b>Met</b>
The requirements for the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are	<b>Met</b>

## What inspection judgements mean

### Registered early years provision

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	Outstanding provision is highly effective in meeting the needs of all children exceptionally well. This ensures that children are very well prepared for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 2	Good	Good provision is effective in delivering provision that meets the needs of all children well. This ensures children are ready for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	The provision is not giving children a good standard of early years education and/or there are minor breaches of the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. We re-inspect nurseries and pre-schools judged as requires improvement within 12 months of the date of inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	Provision that is inadequate requires significant improvement and/or enforcement action. The provision is failing to give children an acceptable standard of early years education and/or is not meeting the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be monitored and inspected again within six months of the date of this inspection.
Met		There were no children present at the time of the inspection. The inspection judgement is that the provider continues to meet the requirements for registration.
Not met		There were no children present at the time of the inspection. The inspection judgement is that the provider does not meet the requirements for registration.

## Inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted 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.

## Setting details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	EY313859
<b>Local authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	978452
<b>Type of provision</b>	Sessional provision
<b>Registration category</b>	Childcare - Non-Domestic
<b>Age range of children</b>	2 - 8
<b>Total number of places</b>	15
<b>Number of children on roll</b>	8
<b>Name of provider</b>	Maidstone Steiner Kindergarten Initiative Committee
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	03/02/2014
<b>Telephone number</b>	07548 328 514

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## Type of provision

For the purposes of this inspection the following definitions apply:

Full-time provision is that which operates for more than three hours. These are usually known as nurseries, nursery schools and pre-schools and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the higher fee for registration.

Sessional provision operates for more than two hours but does not exceed three hours in any one day. These are usually known as pre-schools, kindergartens or nursery schools



and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the lower fee for registration.

Childminders care for one or more children where individual children attend for a period of more than two hours in any one day. They operate from domestic premises, which are usually the childminder's own home. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Out of school provision may be sessional or full-time provision and is delivered before or after school and/or in the summer holidays. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. Where children receive their Early Years Foundation Stage in school these providers do not have to deliver the learning and development requirements in full but should complement the experiences children receive in school.

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