

Inspection of Castle Kindergarten

Fyndoune Community College, Findon Hill, Sacriston, Durham, County Durham DH7 6LU

Inspection date: 17 September 2019

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not applicable

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children are motivated and independent learners, who relish exploring and making discoveries in the stimulating learning environment. Staff offer children good opportunities to investigate during their play. Young children become deeply absorbed in their discoveries. For example, babies notice how they can repeatedly squeeze the bristles of a paintbrush to increase the water flow. Staff encourage babies to explore different textures, using their senses. They support babies well to develop an early understanding of mathematical concepts. For example, they experiment with quantities and measures, filling empty containers of water. However, on some occasions, some staff miss opportunities to help older children to extend their mathematical understanding.

Children behave well and staff are good role models. For example, there are clear expectations and boundaries that help children to understand how to take turns, share and be kind to others. Children develop important skills for their future learning. Babies and young children develop close and affectionate relationships with staff and demonstrate that they feel secure. Children develop high levels of confidence and self-esteem. Staff praise children for their achievements. Children demonstrate a huge sense of pride when staff add their achievement to the 'wow board'.

What does the early years setting do well and what does it need to do better?

- Leaders and staff establish effective partnerships with parents. They value parents highly and involve them in their children's learning. Staff use various strategies to keep parents informed about their child's progress and share ideas about extending their learning at home.
- Staff use effective systems to observe, plan and assess children's progress. They make sure that they capture children's immediate interests in play to extend their experiences. Leaders and staff are passionate in achieving the best possible outcomes for children. They monitor children's progress and use additional funding effectively, to ensure that any gaps in children's learning narrow.
- Children and their families are supported very well. Leaders and staff work in partnership with other professionals effectively to support children's specialist care and learning needs, to help them make good progress.
- Staff place a clear focus on supporting children's understanding of the natural world. For example, staff and children visit a nearby orchard to pick fruit. Children are curious to discuss and make comparisons between the wide range of fruit they collect.
- Children's early literacy skills are developing well. For example, younger children relish exploring their senses as they make marks using paint. Older children are motivated to make marks which have meaning to them and develop their early

writing skills.

- Children develop a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe. For example, during walks, staff support children well to understand the importance of looking and listening for approaching cars. They help children to decide when it is safe to cross the road.
- Staff actively encourage children to learn about other cultures and communities, and to develop positive attitudes towards others. For example, they work well in partnerships with parents to learn about a range of cultural festivals.
- Staff teach children about the importance of living a healthy lifestyle. For instance, they encourage children to follow thorough handwashing routines after picking fruit outdoors. All children have good opportunities to be outdoors on a daily basis and to be physically active.
- Staff help children to develop their independence. For example, younger children are encouraged to serve themselves at mealtimes. However, staff do not consistently organise changes between activities effectively to maintain children's learning. The organisation of lunchtime routines means younger children sit for a long time waiting and some children get restless.
- Overall, leaders support the professional development of staff well. For example, they regularly observe staff and hold individual meetings and provide training. This helps staff to improve their practice and teaching skills and support their well-being. However, staff would benefit from further support to enhance their skills in supporting older children to enhance their mathematical skills.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

All staff have a clear understanding of child protection issues and the procedure to follow if they have a concern about a child's welfare. Leaders review and update policies and procedures, using these effectively to manage any concerns. Policies are shared with staff so that they are aware of their roles and responsibilities and the expectations of the provider. Leaders have a secure knowledge of following safe recruitment guidelines to ensure that new staff are suitable and to check that existing staff remain so. Together with staff, they implement secure procedures to make sure that they identify any hazards in the environment quickly and minimise any risks to children.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- support all staff to develop their understanding of how to build on opportunities to use children's interest in mathematics, to extend their learning further
- review the organisation of some activities and routines, in particular to support children to remain more interested and engaged in all learning opportunities.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY546317
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	10110644
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children	0 to 4
Total number of places	48
Number of children on roll	53
Name of registered person	Castle Kindergarten Limited
Registered person unique reference number	RP546315
Telephone number	07725176123
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

Castle Kindergarten registered in 2017. The setting is open all year round from 7.30am to 6pm, Monday to Friday. It provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. There are eight staff who work with the children. Of these, the manager holds a relevant early years qualification at level 6, five members of staff hold qualifications at level 3 and a further member of staff holds a qualification at level 2.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

June Robinson

Inspection activities

- The inspector held discussions with the leadership team and spoke with children, staff and parents at appropriate times throughout the inspection.
- The inspector looked at a sample of documentation, including evidence of staff suitability checks and information about children's learning.
- The inspector observed activities and the quality of teaching throughout the setting.
- A joint observation of staff practice was carried out by the inspector and the deputy nursery manager.
- The inspector and the deputy manager completed a learning walk across all areas of the setting to understand the organisation of the nursery and how the curriculum is structured.

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.

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