

Inspection of Saplings

Court Lane, Hadlow, Tonbridge, Kent TN11 0DU

Inspection date: 4 December 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 have close relationships with staff and feel secure and confident in the nursery. Babies enjoy reassuring cuddles and happily separate from staff to play alongside their peers. Children, in the main, are constantly engaged and receive positive interaction from staff. Staff provide an enjoyable and stimulating environment for children, who play confidently with their friends. Children show increasing confidence to explore and experiment through play. They thoroughly enjoy taking up the challenge from staff to extend their thinking and abilities. However, during some routine activities, such as lunchtime, some children are not always actively engaged in learning opportunities to fully support their learning.

Children learn how to keep themselves safe. On a cold, icy day, children explore the garden, but are cautious where it is slippery. They are curious to explore the ice, questioning what the salt on the floor is for. Children have confident self-help skills. Babies put tissues in the bin after wiping their noses, toddlers are quick to wash their hands before lunchtime, and older children show determination to put on their coats and boots to play outside.

Leaders and staff are committed to making continuous improvements through ongoing training, research and working in collaboration with other settings.

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

- Children confidently use different forms of communication to express their needs. Babies babble replies to staff's questions using simple, single words and gestures to vocalise their feelings. Toddlers use simple conversation skills, listening to each other and responding in turn to share their ideas. Older children use complex language, question each other's ideas and discuss their findings. Children celebrate each other's ideas with cheers, praise and claps, showing an appreciation for other's successes.
- Children thoroughly enjoy exploring natural materials. They explore the dough, stretching it, rolling it and making recognisable figures. They scrutinise the ice outside, looking at bubbles that have formed and how water squirts up through holes they have made in the ice. They explore how ice cracks and breaks when they put pressure on it.
- Babies explore sounds and songs to encourage their social play, listening skills and physical movement. They vocalise what songs they want with simple sounds, join in with movements and shake instruments. This results in laughter and big smiles from staff and babies to support their self-esteem.
- Staff have effective partnerships with parents and other professionals. They provide a consistent approach to supporting children's ongoing welfare and learning. They go the extra mile to support parents outside the setting by

accompanying them to visit other professionals, to help meet children's additional needs. Staff give parents ideas to help them engage in their children's learning at home.

- Staff provide children with challenges through play that is effectively adult-led and child-initiated. They encourage children to work as a team, to question, problem-solve and think critically about their play. For example, during cooking activities, children question what each ingredient is for. They break eggs themselves and talk about where eggs come from. However, during some routine activities, such as lunchtime, children do not always experience the same positive engagement from staff as they do during their play.
- Leaders use additional funding effectively to give children opportunities to explore streams and nature trails, experience lambing, pick pumpkins, visit the library and go shopping. This helps to support children's life skills and the exploration of local facilities.
- In the main, staff recognise children's achievements and plan their next steps appropriately. Staff provide a wealth of resources, indoors and outdoors, to help children move on to their next stage of their learning. However, staff do not always reflect on children's learning and achievement as well as possible, to help them determine how to plan what children need to learn next.
- Leaders are actively involved in children's play while observing staff's performance. This helps them to plan for individual staff's ongoing professional development.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff have a clear knowledge of the procedures to follow if they have a concern about a child in their care. Leaders ensure staff have access to up-to-date information. Leaders assess staff's ongoing suitability through regular discussions, checks and training. Safety checks are constantly evaluated to make sure they are always effective. For example, following recent evacuation procedures, changes have been made to make sure the fire alarm can be heard throughout the setting. Thorough risk assessments are implemented to extend children's experiences, such as safely transporting children on outings.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- enhance the social experiences and engagement from staff for all children during routine parts of the day, to help fully support their learning
- use observations of children's achievements more effectively and more accurately to fully support how individual children learn best.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY551872
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10130839
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 11
Total number of places	50
Number of children on roll	54
Name of registered person	Hadlow College Governing Body
Registered person unique reference number	RP903581
Telephone number	01732 853225
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

Saplings registered in 2017. The nursery is owned by Hadlow College. It is situated in the village of Hadlow, near Tonbridge, Kent. The nursery operates Monday to Friday, 7.45am until 6pm, 50 weeks a year. The nursery employs 16 staff, of whom 11 are qualified to level 3. One member of staff holds early years teacher status. The nursery provides funded early years places for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Claire Parnell

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed children's play and staff's practice in all three rooms and the outside play areas.
- The inspector completed a learning walk in all the areas of the nursery to understand how the early years provision and the curriculum is organised.
- A joint observation was carried out by the inspector and leaders.
- A meeting was held between the inspector, manager and deputy of the nursery.
- The inspector looked at a sample of documentation. This included evidence of children's records and staff suitability and training.

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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