

Inspection of Mini Cowpers

Hertingfordbury Cowper Primary School, Birch Green, Hertford, Hertfordshire SG14 2LR

Inspection date: 11 December 2019

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

The manager and her dedicated team provide an exciting learning environment where children's natural instincts to play and explore are actively encouraged. Children develop strong bonds and attachments to their key person early on. These attachments provide a safe and secure foundation from which children develop their confidence to explore their surroundings independently. Children respond well to the requests and high expectations of practitioners as they follow instructions and receive lots of praise for good behaviour. Children demonstrate kind and caring attitudes towards one another. For instance, when they see their friend fall off a bicycle, they ask them if they are alright and help them to get up. Practitioners have high expectations for every child to access all areas of learning and achieve their best possible outcomes. Practitioners are well trained to use individual assessments to support all children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Children whose knowledge and understanding are more advanced are challenged appropriately through further questions and conversations, such as, 'What would happen to the snowman in the summer?'. They have plenty of time to think about their answers and to share them with others.

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

- Information about children's interests and experiences is collected from starter packs, observations and assessments to establish their development needs on entry. Parents and practitioners see noticeable rates of progress in children's learning and development within a short space of time. Parents sing the praises of their child's key person as they describe the extra lengths they go to to meet children's needs.
- Children are given responsibilities that are appropriate for their age. They work together during group tidy-up times and celebrate their achievements as a team. Children relish extra opportunities to gain confidence as they lead singing sessions, choose their own songs and perform with puppets and instruments. They receive lots of encouragement from their friends.
- The manager notified Ofsted that a child left the setting unaccompanied during a busy arrival time. They followed their parent out of the front door and their parent brought them back immediately. The manager recognised the seriousness of the incident and took immediate steps to prevent any such event occurring again. Risk assessment procedures have been improved. The arrival procedure has been reviewed to ensure that children are supervised from the moment they arrive at the setting. Other risk assessments are robust and children are well supervised and supported as they play and learn at pre-school.
- Practitioners provide objects to spark children's interests as they explore closely and talk about them. Children show high levels of curiosity in the exciting items

as they show them to adults. They confidently share new vocabulary they have learned, such as 'pine cone' and 'bauble'.

- Staff are confident to ask the manager for any support or training they may need. They report that they are happy and feel well supported to manage their workload.
- The manager recently identified that practitioners lacked confidence in teaching mathematics and children's development was lower. She bought new, exciting resources and sent practitioners on further training. This has improved the way children and adults engage in mathematics and raised children's attainment in this area.
- The outdoor environment is cluttered at times. Children are unable to move as freely as they wish, for example, as they ride tricycles or take part in large physical activity. The manager is considering how to improve the outdoor play space.
- Practitioners work closely together to deliver a fun and ambitious curriculum for all of the children. The manager seeks information from practitioners to help her make improvements. However, she does not always involve the management committee when identifying areas for development, to enable them to support her to make improvements.
- Leaders and practitioners work effectively with parents and outside professionals to give children with SEND their full entitlement to early education and extra support.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Every practitioner has attended relevant safeguarding training and is alert to the signs of potential abuse. All persons who work with children demonstrate a secure knowledge of the local safeguarding procedures to follow if they have concerns about a child's welfare or need to report concerns about someone who works with children. The manager has a robust process to ensure the safe recruitment of suitable adults to work with children.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- increase the involvement of committee members in self-evaluations so they can have a greater impact in achieving the setting's vision for high-quality care and education
- develop the organisation of the outdoor area further to give children more available space to be physically active outdoors.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY292484
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10127390
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	2 to 5
Total number of places	23
Number of children on roll	49
Name of registered person	Hertingfordbury Cowper Preschool Committee
Registered person unique reference number	RP524872
Telephone number	01992 679844
Date of previous inspection	4 July 2016

Information about this early years setting

Mini Cowpers pre-school registered in 2004. It operates from a single-storey building in the grounds of Hertingfordbury Cowper Primary School and is managed by a voluntary committee. The pre-school employs five members of childcare staff, all of whom hold a qualification at level 3 or above. This includes the manager, who holds level 6. The pre-school opens from Monday to Friday during term time only. Morning sessions operate from 9am until 11.45am, optional lunch club sessions operate from 12pm until 1pm and the afternoon sessions operate from 1pm until 3pm. The pre-school provides funded early education for two- and three-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Jacky Reynolds

Inspection activities

- The inspector conducted a learning walk with the manager to determine to what extent the indoor and outdoor environments impact on the learning and development of all children.
- Discussions were held with parents and key members of staff including the committee chairperson, to explore how the pre-school communicates and works with others.
- Relevant documentation was viewed by the inspector to confirm the setting's details, staff qualifications, suitability checks and records of communications with outside agencies.
- A joint observation of an adult-led activity was conducted by the inspector and the manager to evaluate areas of strength and weakness in teaching practice. The inspector also gathered further observations of interactions between practitioners and children throughout the daily routine to evaluate the overall effectiveness of care and education practice.
- A leadership and management meeting between the inspector and the manager was held to assess how the pre-school is run.

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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