

# Inspection of Saplings Nature Kindergarten

Oakerside Dene Lodge, Stanhope Chase, Peterlee SR8 1NJ

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Inspection date: 7 February 2020

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## **Overall effectiveness**

## **Outstanding**

The quality of education

**Outstanding**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Outstanding**

Personal development

**Outstanding**

Leadership and management

**Outstanding**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Not applicable

## **What is it like to attend this early years setting?**

### **The provision is outstanding**

There are exceptional opportunities for children to learn about the natural world at this friendly and welcoming nursery. Children benefit greatly from a range of highly exciting, stimulating and challenging activities and experiences. For example, they build dens and, while closely supervised, learn how to cook on the campfire. Children learn first-hand about nature, seasons, weather and wildlife in the woodland surrounding the nursery. They discuss with staff how leaves change and the names of the birds and trees. Children are taught about life cycles. For example, they learn how to incubate eggs and release toads into the natural environment.

Children very quickly develop their physical skills as they dig with tools. They carry and build with logs, developing their coordination and balance. Children climb into hammocks and clamber on trees with the help of rope ladders. They are very happy, settled and emotionally secure. Children's behaviour is outstanding. They have rich opportunities to learn how to keep themselves safe. For example, they learn how to cut twigs safely and the correct way to use drills and saws. There is a very strong focus on cooperation, friendship and kindness. Staff have high expectations of all the children in their care.

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

- Children benefit from unique opportunities to explore the natural world around them. This includes trips to museums, the beach and storytelling events. Staff provide excellent opportunities for children to access fresh air and exercise and to enjoy the peaceful woodland surroundings. These experiences contribute highly to children's emotional and physical well-being.
- Staff encourage children to have a go at new experiences and to persist if their ideas do not go to plan. Children learn to be resilient, to solve problems and to create their own solutions. The pace of activities is relaxed and matched to the children's interests and needs. Children are provided with plenty of time to experiment, explore and investigate both in the well-resourced indoor space and outside in the woodland environment.
- Children's communication and language skills flourish. Staff introduce new vocabulary, for example 'amphibian' and 'camouflage'. They ask children questions that encourage detailed replies to help extend their vocabulary even further. Children enjoy singing, taking turns in group games, drawing and listening to stories. Their mathematical skills are promoted extremely well through everyday routines and activities. For example, children explore shape and space through daily yoga. Children and staff measure lengths of rope along the woodland floor together. They discuss which is the longest and how they can increase their length by tying two ropes together.

- Staff provide children with superb opportunities that help to promote their growing independence. For example, children toast their own teacakes on sticks over the fire, chop vegetables to make soup and choose their own tools and resources. They discuss how food changes when heated and are fascinated as the colour of toast deepens over the campfire. Children learn from staff about healthy eating and delight in eating food they have cooked themselves.
- Staff are highly skilled and confident, and work very well together as a team. They are dedicated and passionate about their work. Staff are very well supported. The manager meets with them individually and as a team to support their professional development. All staff attend training to keep themselves up to date, including specialised training to support staff in their work with children outdoors.
- Parents speak extremely highly of staff and the quality of education they provide. They feel fully involved in their children's learning and are invited to special events. Parents appreciate the high number of staff and the personal attention this brings for each child.
- Staff evaluate activities with the children so they can gather their ideas about any changes needed. They are excellent role models who encourage the children to be respectful and help others. Staff reflect deeply on the experiences of children and the views of parents in order to provide the highest quality learning and care.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff fully involve children in assessing risks. This helps children to gain an excellent understanding of the reasons for safe practices. Staff teach children extremely important safety messages. For example, the reasons for rules around the campfire. Children understand why they must stay seated and not get too close, and know that only adults put wood on the fire. The manager and staff have an excellent understanding of their responsibilities around keeping children safe. All staff keep themselves up to date with procedures to protect and safeguard children. They know very well how to identify any concerns about children or staff, what procedures to take and who to contact.

## Setting details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	EY553629
<b>Local authority</b>	Durham
<b>Inspection number</b>	10143626
<b>Type of provision</b>	Childcare on non-domestic premises
<b>Registers</b>	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register
<b>Day care type</b>	Sessional day care
<b>Age range of children</b>	2 to 4
<b>Total number of places</b>	12
<b>Number of children on roll</b>	24
<b>Name of registered person</b>	Saplings Nature Kindergarten And Forest School CIC
<b>Registered person unique reference number</b>	RP553628
<b>Telephone number</b>	0191 3497411
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not applicable

## Information about this early years setting

Saplings Nature Kindergarten registered in 2017. It opens Monday to Friday from 8am until 5pm, during term time only. The nursery employs four members of childcare staff. Of these, three are qualified at level 2 or above. One member of staff holds a level 6 qualification, and another is qualified at level 7. The nursery follows forest school principles. It provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

## Information about this inspection

### Inspector

Julie Foers

## Inspection activities

- The inspector observed the quality of teaching during activities and assessed the impact on children's learning. The manager and the inspector evaluated an activity together.
- The manager discussed with the inspector how the setting organises and plans the curriculum and experiences for children. The inspector viewed the inside space and visited an area of woodland used by the nursery.
- The inspector looked at a sample of the setting's documents. This included evidence of training and suitability of staff.
- The inspector held discussions with the manager, the nominated person and senior staff. She spoke to a number of parents to gather their views on the setting.

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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