

Inspection of Whitsers

The Memorial Hall, Mill Lane, Whittlesford, Cambridge CB22 4NE

Inspection date: 22 June 2021

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 confident and happy in this welcoming setting. They are proud to show visitors their achievements and keen to talk about previous experiences. Children are active learners and have a strong exploratory impulse. They persevere to cut fragranced herbs with scissors and pretend to make cakes with them. Children work out how to play a concertina to create sounds. They discover how to change the sound by covering the air holes with their fingers.

Children enjoy painting. They mix different coloured paint together to create a new colour. Children add various quantities of water and notice how the paint changes in consistency. They have a strong sense of self-esteem and are proud to show staff and visitors their pictures. Children enjoy solving problems and testing their ideas. They discover the best way to completely bury a toy elephant is to lay it down in the dry sand. Children have good control and coordination of their hands in preparation for writing. They use a special pen to carefully move small magnetic beads around a maze on a puzzle board.

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

- Staff provide children with a rich and varied curriculum that thoroughly considers children's evolving interests. Parents work in close partnership with staff. They share a wealth of information to help children swiftly settle when they first begin attending. Children build strong bonds with their key person. All staff support children effectively to feel positive about their move to school when the time comes. Parents speak very highly of staff and the service they offer. They particularly appreciate the regular contact during periods of absence due to the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic.
- The committee and staff team are dedicated to their roles. They provide children with experiences that help them to feel a strong sense of belonging in the community. For example, children enjoy waving to local residents on walks in the village and are involved in organised fundraising events.
- Staff provide children with good opportunities to develop healthy lifestyles and be physically active. They help children to grow a selection of fruit and vegetables which will be tasted at snack time. Children benefit from quality time outdoors in the fresh air. They assess their own risks as they work out the best way to climb up and down a hill. Children safely handle a real saw to cut wood.
- Staff are positive role models. Children behave well, consistently use good manners and develop strong relationships with each other. They play harmoniously together and tell each other 'you are my best friend'.
- The manager is proactive in supporting staff's well-being. Staff benefit from regular supervision meetings and have access to training, helping them to develop their practice.

- Group time is a positive and interactive experience that engages children's attention. Staff's effective use of puppets make songs entertaining. This motivates children to join in with the words. Staff introduce children to mathematical concepts, such as addition and subtraction.
- Careful thought is given to how any additional funding the setting receives is spent, to ensure it has the strongest impact on children's development and learning. Staff work in close partnership with other professionals to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities to make good progress. However, staff do not fully support children who speak English as an additional language to hear and use their home language during play and routine activities, to enhance their understanding and speaking skills.
- Some staff encourage children to be independent individuals and have a go at doing things for themselves. However, this is not consistent so that children are fully prepared for the next stage in their development.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The manager and the staff team understand how to identify the signs and symptoms that could indicate a child is at risk. They clearly understand how to report any concerns about children's welfare or the behaviour of another adult. They have a broad understanding of wider safeguarding issues and how to identify and report any concerns. All suitability checks are complete for committee members. Robust recruitment procedures ensure that all staff are suitable. Thorough induction and ongoing support from the manager ensure that staff remain alert to their responsibility of keeping children safe.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- strengthen opportunities for all children who speak English as an additional language to develop and use their home language
- make the best use of daily routines and opportunities to develop children's independence further.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY553885
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	10174292
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register
Day care type	Sessional day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	2 to 4
Total number of places	28
Number of children on roll	25
Name of registered person	Whitsers Pre-School Playgroup CIO
Registered person unique reference number	RP553884
Telephone number	07799092056
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

Whitsers re-registered in 2017. It is managed by a committee and is situated in Whittlesford. There are five members of childcare staff, all of whom hold relevant childcare qualifications at level 3. The setting operates during term time only. It opens from 9am until 3pm on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, and from 9am until 1pm on Monday and Friday. The setting provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Lorraine Pike

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the setting received since the 2020-21 COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the manager and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the setting.
- The manager and the inspector completed a learning walk in all areas of the setting used by children, to understand how the curriculum is organised.
- A joint observation of an activity was carried out by the inspector and the manager. The inspector observed the quality of teaching during activities indoors and outdoors. She assessed the impact this has on children's learning.
- Children spoke to the inspector about the activities they enjoy. Staff talked to the inspector at appropriate times during the inspection.
- The inspector held a meeting with the manager and a member of the committee. She looked at relevant documentation, such as evidence of the suitability of staff working in the setting and committee members. The inspector took account of the views of parents spoken to on the day and their written feedback.

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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