

Inspection of Castle Fields Pre-School

Castle Playing Fields, School Lane, HAVERHILL, Suffolk CB9 9DE

Inspection date: 16 September 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

Staff warmly greet children and parents on arrival. Due to the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic, parents can no longer come into the pre-school. They say goodbye at the main gate. Familiar staff are there to help distract and settle the children. This supports children to feel safe and secure.

Children show delight in playing freely outdoors. They enjoy going on nature walks to the nearby field and search for living things using magnifying glasses. Children closely examine insects such as butterflies and slugs. They discuss the similarities between slugs and snails. Children collect blackberries from bushes to take back to the pre-school. This supports their understanding of the world around them and helps those children who learn best from being outside to do so.

Children confidently select from a wide variety of inviting activities that are fun and inspire them to have a go. Staff skilfully engage with and build on children's interests, helping them to develop a positive attitude to learning. Children show increasing skills in counting. For example, they practise counting to five when rescuing small toy people from pretend fires. Staff use these opportunities to teach simple mathematical concepts such as one more and one less.

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

- Children have the opportunity to be physically active. Younger children learn to identify and manage risks appropriately with minimal support from staff. They learn to climb and slide on the apparatus. Children learn how to keep themselves safe.
- Staff encourage younger children's language development as they read books together. Staff model new words as they point out familiar characters in the illustrations. They make sure that books are available both inside and outdoors for children to access. This helps to promote children's literacy and their love of books.
- Children behave well and are confident. They learn to take turns and share the resources. When children want to play with the same toy as their friends and become upset, staff sensitively help them to understand and manage their emotions. Children are supported to identify feelings and look at strategies to help them regulate these. For example, staff talk to children about how animals show their anger and how they learn to control this. Children have formed strong friendships and learn to share, cooperate and resolve conflicts calmly.
- The manager has high expectations of all children. Staff follow the children's interests, helping them to make independent choices. Staff monitor the learning and development of each child and set appropriate next steps. As a result, children make good progress from their starting points. However, staff do not

always know how best to engage children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to ensure they receive equal learning experiences. The use of additional funding is planned well to ensure children's individual learning needs are met.

- Parents comment positively about the setting. They feel that their children are making good progress, particularly with speech and language. They reflect on the changes the COVID-19 pandemic has had, particularly around how they drop off their children and how they have less opportunity to talk with their child's key person. The manager has started to look at ways to strengthen communication with parents, for example through the use of a secure online platform where they can share observations and photographs from the pre-school and parents can add comments from home.
- Children's independence skills are nurtured well within the pre-school. They confidently look for their name cards, as they self-register on arrival. Staff encourage children to 'have a go' when trying to complete tasks for themselves. Children demonstrate their self-care skills as they put on their coats and change their clothes. Toys and resources are stored to enable children to select for themselves, further promoting their independence and confidence.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The manager has robust procedures in place to ensure that those working with children are suitable to do so. There are comprehensive checks of the suitability of staff. The manager and staff have a good knowledge and awareness of safeguarding procedures and know the dangers to children from extreme views and behaviours. Safeguarding policies are regularly reviewed and updated. There is an identified designated safeguarding lead, to ensure that any concerns are appropriately reported. Staff act swiftly to seek help from other agencies to safeguard children when required.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- further improve staff's knowledge around how to support and engage children with SEND, to help them to make even better progress
- further develop the sharing of information between children's key person and parents, to enable parents to continue their children's learning at home.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY549014
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	10173982
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Day care type	Sessional day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	2 to 3
Total number of places	30
Number of children on roll	54
Name of registered person	Castle Fields Pre-School
Registered person unique reference number	RP549013
Telephone number	01440 705800
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

Castle Fields Pre-School registered in 2017. The pre-school employs eight members of childcare staff. Of these, seven hold appropriate early years qualifications, including one who holds qualified teacher status. The pre-school opens Monday to Friday during term times. Sessions are from 9am until midday and from midday until 3pm. The pre-school provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Shelly McDougall

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the provider received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the provider and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the provider.
- The inspector viewed the provision and discussed the safety and suitability of the premises.
- The inspector and the manager completed a tour of the setting to understand how the early years provision and the curriculum are organised.
- The inspector observed the quality of teaching during activities indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact this had on children's learning.
- The inspector spoke with staff at appropriate times throughout the inspection and completed a joint observation with the manager.
- Children spoke to/communicated with the inspector during the inspection.
- The inspector held a meeting with the manager and also discussed self-evaluation.
- Parents shared their views of the setting with the inspector.
- The inspector looked at relevant documentation and reviewed evidence of the suitability of staff working in the pre-school.

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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