

Inspection of Scalliwags Pre-School

St Andrew's Youth Hall, St Andrew's Recreation Ground, Off Church Road, Paddock Wood, Tonbridge, Kent TN12 6HT

Inspection date: 28 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

Children have positive relationships with each other and with the staff. For example, children and staff play musical instruments and sing their favourite songs together. Children enjoy their time in the pre-school. They are confident that they are safe and secure. Children play cooperatively, take turns and share resources. They know how to keep themselves safe. For example, they take turns on the slide and wait for their friends to move away from the bottom before they have their turn. Children understand the routines and boundaries that help them to feel safe and behave well. Children demonstrate this as they quickly follow instructions to wash their hands before meals. They show kindness to their friends. For example, they help each other to find their water bottles.

Staff know the children well. They work as an effective team to plan interesting and challenging activities for children that build on their previous experiences. For instance, children are introduced to different fruits and this is extended to include a wide variety of vegetables. Children understand that eating fruit and vegetables helps to keep them healthy, and confidently tell the inspector how much they enjoyed the fruit smoothies they made recently. Children are independent. For example, they put on their own shoes and coats. They have positive attitudes to learning. For example, they persevere with the tweezers to pick up the pasta.

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

- Partnerships with parents are good. Parents say that their children quickly settle in at the pre-school. They work with staff to identify what children can do and where their interests lie. Parents are pleased with the frequency of communication with their child's key person.
- Staff use children's interests to plan activities that build on their learning. They assess children's learning and monitor the progress they make before planning more experiences. This helps children to make good progress.
- Overall, staff develop children's vocabulary effectively. They help them to link actions to words, such as rolling out the gingerbread. Occasionally, staff ask closed questions. This prevents opportunities for further learning. Furthermore, some staff require additional support in how to extend children's language in their interactions with them.
- Children's understanding of mathematical language is developed effectively. For instance, children are encouraged to count to see how many apples there are 'altogether'. Children measure the distance they have thrown the wellington boots and talk about which is the furthest away.
- There are many opportunities for children to develop their early writing skills. Children strengthen their fingers as they separate the cornflakes from the pasta with tweezers. They add water to cornflour to make 'gloop' and write individual

letters in it, such as 'm'. Others draw with the chalks outside. Older children are beginning to learn how to write their names. This helps children to prepare for the next stage of their education.

- Children have a wide range of activities to support their sensory development. They delight in the feel of the thick paint as they spread it over their paper with their hands. Children observe the changes in the feel of cooked and uncooked pasta. They notice that the pasta becomes soft and slimy after cooking.
- Staff make good use of spontaneous opportunities that arise. For example, children are very excited when they find a crane fly. Staff talk to them about the number of legs and help them to identify the wings and what they are used for.
- Leaders are reflective and keen to support children's learning at home. They plan to introduce a learning library of books and activities for parents to borrow to use at home. Staff benefit from regular meetings with managers to discuss their practice and training needs. Staff say they are well supported in pursuing further professional development to help them to meet the needs of the children.
- There are good links between the pre-school and other providers. Staff are in regular contact with other settings children attend, and they share information to ensure a consistent approach to children's learning. For example, they have liaised with the school about handwriting and the teaching of initial sounds.
- Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported. Staff work with other professionals, such as speech therapists, to provide additional support. Additional funding is used effectively and this helps children to make good progress.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The manager and her staff have a good knowledge and understanding of safeguarding and child protection. They can recognise signs that may suggest a child is at risk of abuse or in danger from extremism. Staff know where to seek advice from about concerns they may have. Regular safeguarding training ensures that staff keep their knowledge up to date. Risk assessments are completed on a daily basis to help to keep children safe as they play and learn. There are thorough procedures in place to make sure that only suitable people are employed to work with the children.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- develop staff's use of open-ended questions to extend children's learning
- enhance staff's ability to build on children's language, to enable them to better support children to extend their vocabulary and sentences even further.

Setting details

Unique reference number	2515454
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10194525
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	34
Number of children on roll	52
Name of registered person	Scalliwags Pre-School CIO
Registered person unique reference number	2515453
Telephone number	01892 835980
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

Scalliwags Pre-School registered in 2019 and is located in Paddock Wood, Tonbridge, Kent. The pre-school employs nine members of staff, seven of whom hold relevant early years qualifications at level 3 or above, including three who hold qualifications at level 6 and two who hold qualified teacher status. The pre-school is open from Monday to Friday during term time only. Sessions are from 9am to 3.30pm. The pre-school provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector
Jill Thewlis

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the pre-school received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the provider and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the pre-school.
- The manager and the inspector had a learning walk together of all areas of the pre-school and discussed the early years curriculum.
- The inspector talked to staff, parents and children at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The special educational needs coordinator spoke to the inspector about how they support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The inspector carried out joint observations with the manager and discussed the learning that was taking place.
- The manager showed the inspector documentation to demonstrate the suitability of staff.

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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