

Inspection of Space Cadets

Staffordshire County Council, Squirrel Hayes County First School, Springfield Road,
Stoke-On-Trent ST8 7DF

Inspection date: 24 March 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good
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What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children receive a warm and friendly welcome from the manager and staff. They quickly settle into the routines of the setting and chat with their friends. Children make independent choices on the direction of their play from the available resources and become engaged in their chosen activity. Children make good progress from their starting points. They learn through an effective balance of adult-led activities and child-initiated play. Children are confident and form emotional attachments with staff and their key person, which helps them to feel safe and secure.

Children's behaviour is good. They respond positively to the gentle reminders from staff to share, take turns and be kind to others. Children receive encouragement and praise, which helps to support their self-esteem. This is demonstrated when children show pride in their achievements, sharing their drawings with the inspector. Children demonstrate good pencil control and can recognise and write some numbers and the letters of their name. Children are supported to develop an awareness of cultures beyond their own. Staff teach children about different festivals through planned activities, such as painting pictures of four-leaf clovers for Saint Patrick's Day. Children have opportunities to learn about the world around them, such as the changing seasons and nature. They have fun as they fill bird feeders with seeds and fat balls. Children use their imagination in the mud kitchen. They eagerly work together to find leaves and twigs and excitedly exclaim they are making porridge.

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

- The manager is ambitious and highly committed to her role. She is proud of the strengths of the setting, such as how the setting remained open during the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions to the children of key workers in the local area. The manager values her staff and their well-being and, as a result, they feel appreciated and are happy working at the setting. Staff turnover is low, providing continuity in children's care.
- Parent partnerships are good. The manager and staff share information about children's development, both verbally and via an online application. They offer support to parents on how they can support their children's learning and development at home. Parents speak very highly of the manager and staff and say their children really enjoy attending.
- Children benefit from daily opportunities to play outside. They enjoy climbing, balancing and navigating the apparatus in the larger space connected to the host school. Children have lots of fun as they roll and kick balls to knock down skittles. Children express their enjoyment as staff join in their play with enthusiasm. However, staff do not always consider ways to make effective use

of the outdoor environment to support and enhance learning for those children who prefer to learn outside.

- Staff know the children well and act as excellent role models. They engage children in activities that build on their interests and next steps in learning. Children are supported to be independent and develop healthy habits. They learn what constitutes a healthy diet and that too much sugar can cause problems with teeth, such as cavities. Children take part in yoga exercises, which helps them to develop physically and promotes a sense of well-being.
- Staff support children's communication and language skills. They interact well with children, make good eye contact and get down to their level. Staff engage children in conversations, narrate their play and ask open-ended questions to support their thinking skills. However, staff do not always recognise spontaneous opportunities, such as incidental conversations and activities, to extend, consolidate and enrich children's learning.
- Older children enjoy their time in the before- and after-school club and holiday club. They take part in games and gardening activities and go on local outings. Children openly talk about their school day and are encouraged to express their ideas and make choices about what they want to do.
- The manager is self-reflective in the continuing evaluation of the setting and can identify areas of strength and areas to improve. She holds regular supervisions with staff and supports their professional development. The manager and staff build successful partnerships with the host school and local schools that children are due to attend, to enable smooth transitions for children's further learning.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The manager has robust recruitment and vetting arrangements to ensure that those working with children are suitable for their role. Staff have a good understanding of child protection, including the broader aspects of safeguarding, such as the 'Prevent' duty. The manager makes sure that staff undertake regular training, so that their knowledge remains current. Staff know how to deal with concerns about a child's welfare and have a secure understanding of local safeguarding procedures for reporting allegations. The premises are safe and secure, and staff are well deployed to ensure children are fully supervised.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- support staff to use more opportunities to help children consolidate their learning and understanding
- review and enhance the outdoor learning environment, particularly for those children who prefer to learn outdoors.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY494736
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10219653
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 at time of inspection	2 to 11
Total number of places	32
Number of children on roll	84
Name of registered person	Morton, Krystle Wendy
Registered person unique reference number	RP906397
Telephone number	07757954919 or 07500803876
Date of previous inspection	4 August 2016

Information about this early years setting

Space Cadets registered in 2015. The setting employs four members of childcare staff; all hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 2 to level 5. The setting opens from Monday to Friday, all year round. During term time, sessions are from 7.20am to 9am, 12pm to 3pm and 3pm to 6.15pm. The holiday club also opens during school holidays from 7.20am until 6.15pm.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Angela Hulme

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the setting received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the provider and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the setting.
- The manager and the inspector completed a learning walk together to look at how the curriculum is planned to meet children's needs and development.
- A meeting was held with the inspector and the manager to discuss leadership and management arrangements.
- The inspector observed the quality of teaching during activities indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact this has on children's learning.
- The inspector looked at relevant documentation and checked evidence of the suitability of the staff working in 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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