

Inspection of Thakeham Preschool

35 Abingworth Crescent, Thakeham, Pulborough, West Sussex RH20 3GW

Inspection date: 30 March 2022

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

Children arrive excited and eager to play at the exceptionally nurturing and safe pre-school. They form extremely strong bonds with staff who welcome them with smiles and cuddles. Children flourish in the loving and child-centred environment and they gain secure and successful skills for their future learning.

Children's behaviour is exemplary. They learn what makes them unique and special and they begin to accept and adapt to the needs of others. Children devise sophisticated 'rules' during their own highly creative and imaginative games as they listen and negotiate with one another. They demonstrate social confidence and high self-esteem and they form respectful and secure friendships.

Children are highly motivated, engaged, focused and keen to learn. For example, they demonstrate their curiosity as active 'researchers' when they spontaneously look for information in books. Children are inspired to experiment and try out their ideas. They demonstrate excellent attention and concentration, such as when they paint dinosaurs or use tongs and paintbrushes to find pretend fossils in the sand.

Children develop a deep love of the outdoors. They enjoy regular and inspirational gardening and forest school activities, where they learn to compost, care for plants and harvest their crop. Under close supervision, children have exciting experiences, such as cooking over a real fire. This helps children develop an excellent awareness of the natural world and how to be safe and responsible within it.

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

- The manager is a highly dedicated and ambitious leader. Her vision and ethos for the pre-school is extremely well defined and communicated to staff, parents and children. Staff work as a strong and supportive team. They ensure all children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those for whom English is an additional language, receive consistently high standards of care and quality of education.
- Staff plan an extremely clear and well-sequenced curriculum. They pay meticulous attention to the development, learning styles and interests of the children. This ensures there is always an excellent balance between achievable and challenging activities to help children develop their skills to the highest level. Any gaps in children's learning are recognised early and swift interventions are put in place to close them.
- Staff support children's communication and language skills exceptionally well. They precisely understand the levels of support individual children need to make progress. This ranges from one-to-one, focused language activities, to extending children's conversations during routine tasks. Children build an extensive

vocabulary and express themselves fluently.

- Children develop a deep love and understanding of books. Following a very well-read story, staff dress up and take on the role of a character from the book. Children ask them inquiring questions, such as 'what is it like to live in the bear cave?' to find out more. This builds on children's knowledge, as they listen carefully and demonstrate very high levels of thinking and processing.
- Staff are excellent at using spontaneous opportunities to extend children's learning, particularly in mathematics. For instance, children know they need a 'two' and a 'one' to make '21' when they count one another. Outside, children count the clicks on a measuring wheel and compare the size of the space with one another, demonstrating their knowledge of how numbers are ordered. Children develop excellent mathematical awareness.
- Children improve their physical skills in the inspirational outdoor space. They experience an extremely wide range of activities to develop their coordination, movement and strength. Children confidently explore their interests as they water the vegetable beds, paint the shed with mud and water and dig for 'fossils' in the sand. They demonstrate exceptional fine motor skills as they develop their skills for writing and drawing.
- Staff are excellent role models for children's learning, curiosity and inquisitiveness. For example, staff pretend they do not know what a fossil is and ask children to help them find out. This means they share in the learning that is created as children demonstrate awe and wonder in new ideas and possibilities. Children begin to use their prior learning, such as an interest in dinosaurs, to understand new concepts.
- The manager and staff develop excellent partnerships with parents. They share regular and meaningful information with parents to support the children's learning and development. Parents cannot praise staff highly enough for the support they receive to continue their children's learning at home.
- The manager plans frequent meetings and supervision to discuss staff well-being, workload and professional development. Staff say they love working in the pre-school and recognise how the manager has their best interests at heart.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The manager and staff understand their responsibility for keeping children safe. They have robust recruitment procedures in place to ensure the suitability of all staff looking after children. Staff know what to do if they are concerned about the welfare and safety of children. They know how to refer their concerns, including if any allegations were made about staff. They receive training to increase their knowledge of wider safeguarding issues, such as the 'Prevent' duty guidance and how to keep children safe when they are online. Staff create a culture of open communication, where children are encouraged to express their thoughts and feelings. This helps children gain the skills they need to keep themselves safe.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY555832
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	10174777
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	30
Number of children on roll	42
Name of registered person	Thakeham Pre-School Committee
Registered person unique reference number	RP524436
Telephone number	01798 817 437
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

Thakeham Preschool registered in 2018, and is in Thakeham, West Sussex. It is open from 8.30am to 3.30pm, Monday to Friday, term time only. The pre-school receives funding for children aged two, three and four years. There are nine members of staff, of whom eight hold appropriate childcare qualifications from level 2 to level 5. The manager holds a level 4 qualification.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Alison Martin

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection that the pre-school had 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 provider.
- The manager and inspector completed a learning walk together of all areas of the pre-school and discussed the early years curriculum.
- The inspector observed the quality of education being provided, indoors and outdoors and assessed the impact that this was having on children's learning.
- The inspector spoke to staff, children and parents, and took account of their views.
- The manager and the inspector carried out a joint observation of a communication and language activity.
- 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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