

Inspection of Conkers Life Kindergarten

The Hagg, Lintzford Road, Hamsterley Mill, Rowlands Gill, Durham NE39 1ND

Inspection date: 25 May 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

Conkers Life Kindergarten is a special place for children to learn, play and grow. Children flourish due to the excellent standard of education and nurturing that they receive. It is, in the words of one parent, 'an amazingly special place for children to learn'. Children put on their boots and waterproof coats as quickly as they can because they cannot wait to get there. They independently explore and problem-solve in a range of ways. This could be designing a beach in the sand tray, cooking in the mud kitchen or working out how to scramble down a slope using a rope.

Children take the opportunities they are given to connect with the natural world. They look carefully under leaves, searching for snails. They take great care of the snails and are in awe as they touch the shells and bodies. They tell the inspector that snails will omit foam when they are frightened. The mud kitchen suddenly becomes a place to make pizzas, where children use berries, leaves, water and mud to make the most delicious pizzas. Children learn new ways to be creative. For example, they carefully arrange petals, leaves and herbs in between folded white cloth, which they beat with a small hammer. Children are amazed at the intricate detail of the leaves and the beautiful colours that emerge. Children rise to the challenges of the outdoor activities incredibly well. For example, they soon learn to cope with eating their packed lunches outside and manage hot food in flasks.

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

- The manager and staff's passion for giving every child an exciting education is notable. Plans are clear and ambitious. The manager and staff ensure there are no limits to what the children can achieve. They are highly ambitious about providing outdoor education which supports children in all areas of their learning.
- Children have an extremely positive attitude to learning because they are inspired by the curriculum. It is appropriately demanding for them. This is because staff use their thorough knowledge of each child to provide the right level of guidance and support.
- Staff are skilful at observing and adjusting the way they intervene when working with children. They readily re-word questions, pose problems and offer suggestions during activities so that all children can achieve. Children are not deterred at all by the wind as they persevere to make a kite. They work out how long the sticks and string need to be and then experiment with how to get them attached to the kite. Children are particularly persistent and try different lengths of string to test the best effect. They show absolute joy when they succeed in flying their kites.
- Children's communication and language skills flourish. Staff introduce new vocabulary, such as 'experiment' and 'germinate'. They ask children questions

that encourage detailed replies. This helps to extend children's thinking and vocabulary still further. Children create their own storylines using picture cards. They listen to their friends retell their stories and add their own creative endings.

- Staff provide an excellent outdoor learning environment for children and a wealth of opportunities to develop children's physical skills. Children learn to confidently navigate the woodland and meadow area. They enthusiastically climb up slopes and clamber along logs under the discreet supervision of staff. Children have an incredible awareness of their own safety and that of others. They know and follow safety rules and boundaries as they use hammers and transport materials in wheelbarrows. This allows children to think for themselves, make choices and try things out. These are excellent skills that children will use with superb effect as they move forward in their learning.
- Children understand the need to respect and care for the natural environment. For example, they suddenly remember to be as quiet as possible when they approach a bird box because the blue tits have chicks inside. Children learn about reducing waste and recycling. They distinguish between food waste that will be used to feed the hens and waste that goes into the compost bin. Children grow and harvest pumpkins and make their own butter and honey. They develop positive attitudes towards trying the new foods they have nurtured.
- Children display much maturity as they listen closely and respond positively to the direction and guidance of staff. As a result, they develop and display high levels of self-control and cooperation. Children learn quickly by accepting responsibility, including getting dressed without help, recording their friends' choices of snack, and tidying away and taking care of equipment.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The manager and staff have extensive knowledge of safeguarding. Secure arrangements are in place to ensure all staff keep their knowledge up to date through frequent safeguarding discussions and exploring scenarios in team meetings. All staff are extremely knowledgeable about the signs that may indicate a child is vulnerable to abuse. They know the procedures they must follow when they have concerns about children's welfare and in the event that an allegation may be made against a colleague. A rigorous recruitment procedure and carefully planned induction ensure staff's initial and ongoing suitability to work with children. Exemplary teaching means that children constantly learn how to keep themselves safe.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY562599
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	10191025
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	3 to 6
Total number of places	16
Number of children on roll	24
Name of registered person	Quigley, Christina
Registered person unique reference number	RP562598
Telephone number	07836323022
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

Conkers Life Kindergarten registered in 2018. The kindergarten opens on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, term time only. Sessions are from 8.30am until 3.30pm. The kindergarten employs four members of childcare staff. Of these, two hold qualified teacher status, one holds an appropriate early years qualification at level 5 and one is unqualified. The kindergarten provides funded early education for three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Janet Fairhurst

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the provider received since the 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 provider.
- The manager and the inspector completed a learning walk together of all areas of the nursery and discussed the early years curriculum.
- Staff and children spoke to the inspector during the inspection.
- The inspector observed the quality of education being provided outdoors and assessed the impact that this was having on children's learning.
- The manager and the inspector carried out a joint observation together.
- The inspector looked at relevant documentation and evidence of the suitability of staff working in the nursery.
- The inspector reviewed written feedback and spoke with parents and took account of feedback offered.

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.

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk

This publication is available at <https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2022