

Inspection of Chiddingstone Nursery School

Chiddingstone Castle, Hill Hoath Road, Chiddingstone, Edenbridge, Kent TN8 7AD

Inspection date: 7 June 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
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 are extremely confident and comfortable in their play environment. They adapt the environment to extend and enhance their play. They develop very close relationships with their friends and the staff. The consistent staff team allows children to build close bonds to openly share their excitement, their experiences and their fears in confidence. The skills that children learn helps them in preparation for the next stage in their education.

Children show curiosity and inquisitiveness. They explore and experiment in their play, particularly outside. Staff evaluate the outdoor play environment and change this according to the children's interests. For example, adding additional water to a natural puddle area using tubes and guttering. Children extend their exploration using their interests and the particular way they like to learn. They transport their resources to areas of interests. For example, bikes with trailers and wheelbarrows on top to carrying their toolkits.

Children behave impeccably. They receive plentiful recognition for positive interactions with their friends. They openly show care and compassion towards their friends when they are upset or frustrated. For example, when an imaginative activity does not meet a child's satisfaction, other children comfort their friends with kind words and hugs. Staff are very positive role models for children, supporting each other in all their work.

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

- Children think carefully when staff effectively question their play. This helps to develop children's critical thinking and problem-solving. They have time to absorb the information and questions, think about their knowledge and respond with expressions, gestures and verbal responses. Children use complex language, continuously expanding their vocabulary. Staff introduce new words into children's play constantly and use these repetitively, using subtle references to them, until children start to naturally use these words in their play. Children's positive confidence to express themselves is increasing by the day.
- Children experience sensual and malleable play to help develop effective physical skills. This helps to supports skills in readiness for school. Children pour, scoop, and squirt at the 'potions lab', helping them to develop the muscles that are required to make purposeful marks when labelling their drawings.
- Children thoroughly enjoy playing with their peers. Most of their learning takes place during child-led play where staff expertly use their knowledge of the children to extend their thinking and play experiences. Most group, adult-led activities are carefully carried out, providing appropriate challenges according to children's abilities. However, on some occasions this is not always successful and

the purpose of learning is directed at the older children. For example, older children understand the sounds and letters discussed in group times but this is too complex for younger children who, therefore, do not fully benefit from these activities.

- Staff have a very positive attitude towards their professional development. They are eager to improve their practice for the children who are currently attending. They show a proactive approach to their work ethic and want to know the best way to support children's learning, development and welfare.
- Parents make very positive comments about the care and learning their children receive. They gain information about their child's development through online platforms, verbal information, displays and websites. They are actively involved in their children's learning through advice and support from all the staff.
- Staff work with other professionals and within the local community to give children an opportunity to develop a sense of belonging. Their transition to other places of learning is supported well. There are clear communications with schools. Children learn about the environment around them, are introduced to staff at school and visit regularly to help this transition.
- Staff know children extremely well and know their interests, their characters and how they learn best. They plan for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities very effectively, providing challenges to support their individual needs.
- Children learn to take risks safely. They question their own capabilities to enable them to stay safe. They confidently explore resources and adapt their use to further explore movement. For example, adapting the use of equipment to make stilts, balancing and moving around the outdoor play area.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff have an extremely good understanding of keeping children safe. Policies and procedures are regularly updated and reflect the current practice in the setting. Staff have a clear knowledge of the signs and symptoms of abuse. Children play in a safe environment. Very effective risk assessments are carried out that reflect children's abilities, their interests and the physical environment they play in. Children visit local amenities within the community, such as the woods, the castle and the grounds. Staff ensure hazards are removed to allow children to play independently and to explore to their full potential.

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 strengthen the delivery of activities and ensure that they are suitable for the ages and stages of development of the children participating.

Setting details

Unique reference number	2578690
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10239423
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	20
Number of children on roll	43
Name of registered person	Chiddingstone Nursery School Charitable Incorporated Organisation
Registered person unique reference number	2578689
Telephone number	01892 871315
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

Chiddingstone Nursery School registered in 2020. It operates from a converted stable block in the grounds of Chiddingstone Castle, near Sevenoaks, Kent. It operates from 9am until 3pm Monday to Thursday, and 9am until 12 midday on a Friday, term time only. The setting is in receipt of funding for two-, three- and four-year-old children. The setting employs six members of staff, five of whom hold qualifications to level 3 and above.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Claire Parnell

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 provider and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the provider.
- The manager joined the inspector on a learning walk and talked to the inspector about their curriculum and what they want their children to learn.
- Children told the inspector about their friends and what they like to do when they are at the setting.
- The inspector talked to staff at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The inspector carried out joint observations of group activities with the manager.
- The inspector spoke to several parents during the inspection and took account of their views.
- 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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