

# Inspection of Footprints In The Forest - Forest School

Chapelford Village Primary School, Santa Rosa Boulevard, Great Sankey,  
Warrington, Warrington WA5 3AL

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Inspection date: 11 July 2022

**The quality and  
standards of early  
years provision**

**This  
inspection**

**Met**

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Previous  
inspection

Not applicable

## **What is it like to attend this early years setting?**

### **This provision meets requirements**

Children arrive at this wonderful forest school with smiles on their faces. They show good manners while greeting staff and while talking about their busy day in school. Children eagerly ask if the inspector is 'coming to forest school'. There are some changes to routines following the COVID-19 pandemic. Children show resilience and understand the routines. For example, they sanitise their hands on entry and quickly put their belongings away.

Children show positive attitudes towards their play and engage well in their activities. While they have access to indoor spaces, most children spend their time in the exciting outdoor areas. They invited the inspector to the 'spa' where they cooled their feet in buckets of water, saying 'It feels nice'. Children have many opportunities to develop their large-muscle, coordination and spatial skills. For example, they climb up the trees and walk across balance beams. Children fill containers to 'water the plants, so that they grow'. They develop their speaking and thinking skills. For example, children say that they would 'need water and food' to survive in the desert. They develop their own narratives while they play, such as when 'making a fairy land, where all fairies live'.

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

- The provider is passionate about outdoor learning. Her main priority is to provide children with a 'safe environment' where they can 'enjoy themselves and learn new life skills'. Thorough self-evaluation includes the views of children, parents and staff. This helps leaders to continue to improve the forest school experience even further.
- Staff provide children with activities which complement their learning from school. For example, children develop their small-muscle skills while creating 'clay puppets'. They think of their own ideas and designs. For example, some children decided to make a 'snail lollipop', while others discussed how to make patterns on their clay mushrooms. Children suggest that they could perform a puppet show with their models, and quickly become excited at the prospect.
- Children are confident individuals and happily engage in conversations. For example, they explain that they love 'playing with their friends' while at the forest school. They say that they enjoy the 'freedom' to choose their own activities, such as making 'mud pies'. Children are learning about similarities and differences between themselves and others. For example, they show curiosity towards the inspector and tell him that his clothes look 'fancy'. They enjoy learning about other cultures, such as through Greek dancing.
- Staff promote children's sense of achievement and belonging through a system where they can earn 'beetle points'. Some children are chosen to be

'ambassadors' and positively explain what this entails. Their job is to help children 'have fun' and ensure that they 'have friends to play with'. Children are proud of their forest school and relish the opportunity to take the inspector on a walk to showcase the different areas.

- Care practices are good. Staff promote children's self-care skills well. For example, they encourage children to be independent while they change into their forest school clothes. Children hand out the plates and serve the afternoon snack to their friends. Staff involve children in verbal risk assessments. For example, they prompt and support children to determine how to stay safe while playing in the hot weather. Children understand safety rules, such as how high on the 'climbing tree' they are permitted to climb.
- Partnership working is strong. Excellent links with the host school help to support children's continuity of care. Parents comment that they could not be happier with the quality of care that staff provide. They are assured that their children are 'safe and happy' while 'learning essential life skills'.
- Staff access a programme of effective support and supervision, which helps them to continually improve their practice. For example, they complete online training and attend meetings to further develop their knowledge and skills. They say that they feel 'part of a team' and are very happy in their roles.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and staff complete comprehensive risk assessments to make sure that the premises are secure and that all activities are safe. They teach children how to manage risks safely. Recruitment procedures are robust and ensure that staff are suitable to work with children. Staff complete safeguarding training every year and leaders check that this knowledge is up to date. They have a thorough understanding of the local authority's referral procedures, should there be concerns around children's welfare or the conduct of a colleague. Staff have a broad understanding of safeguarding issues, such as extreme views and the 'Prevent' duty.

## Setting details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	2548220
<b>Local authority</b>	Warrington
<b>Inspection number</b>	10233436
<b>Type of provision</b>	Childcare on non-domestic premises
<b>Registers</b>	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
<b>Day care type</b>	Out-of-school day care
<b>Age range of children at time of inspection</b>	4 to 11
<b>Total number of places</b>	50
<b>Number of children on roll</b>	254
<b>Name of registered person</b>	Footprints In The Forest - Forest School Ltd
<b>Registered person unique reference number</b>	2548219
<b>Telephone number</b>	07873811881
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not applicable

## Information about this early years setting

Footprints In The Forest - Forest School registered in 2019. It operates from Chapelford Village Primary School in Great Sankey, Warrington. The forest school employs four members of staff. Of these, all hold early years qualifications at level 2 or above. One member of staff holds qualified teacher status. Sessions are Monday to Friday, from 7.30am to 8.45am and then from 3.15pm to 6pm, during term time. During school holidays, the forest school opens Monday to Friday from 8am to 6pm.

## Information about this inspection

### Inspector

David Lobodzinski

## 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 his evaluation.
- Relevant documentation was reviewed by the inspector, including evidence of the suitability and training of staff.
- The provider, the inspector and children completed a learning walk, to determine the organisation and planning of activities.
- The inspector observed the interactions between staff and children as they engaged with activities and care routines.
- The inspector held discussions with leaders, staff and children at appropriate times throughout the inspection.
- Parents' views were considered by the inspector, through written testimonials and a discussion.

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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