

Inspection of Castle Kindergarten

Fyndoune Community College, Findon Hill, Sacriston, Durham, County Durham DH7 6LU

Inspection date: 3 October 2022

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Good

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children receive a warm, nurturing and friendly welcome when they arrive. They respond well to staff and learn in a fun and safe place. Children have a positive attitude to learning and are eager to join in the activities planned for them. Babies develop their movement skills. For example, they shuffle on their bottoms and reach for resources, such as books to look at. Two-year-olds enjoy making large marks using paint on paper. This is an early start to writing. Pre-school children explore resources linked to autumn. For example, they feel the skin on pumpkins and see how many small ones will fit into a measuring jug.

The leadership team and staff are committed to working with the families and children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The special educational needs coordinator observes the children and guides staff on how they can work effectively to meet the needs of the children.

Overall, children behave well. Staff give them lots of reminders to use kind hands and to walk in the rooms. However, there are times in pre-school, such as tidy up time, where children can be disruptive.

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

- The leadership team has a clear vision for the future of the nursery. Though there has been a high turnover of staff recently, they feel that they are starting to build a good team. They are aware of staff's strengths and aspects of their practice that can be developed further. For example, currently they are focused on helping staff to make sure that the curriculum and planning meets children's individual needs, to raise their achievements to a higher level.
- The professional development of staff is given priority. The leadership team carry out inhouse workshops with staff, to strengthen their knowledge and understanding. They observe staff in their work with children and give them guidance on what they could be doing better. They hold regular supervisions and appraisal meetings with staff, where they discuss individual children and their own development.
- The leadership team use self-evaluation to identify what works well in the nursery and what could be better. They ensure that additional funding, such as early years pupil premium, is used effectively to promote the well-being and learning of children. For example, funds have been used to expand the outdoor area for children who learn best outside. They are keen to gain the children's voice on what they would like in this area and also to seek the views of parents.
- Staff support children's early language development well. They focus on developing children's love of books and provide quiet, covered areas for them to read. Staff use singing and signing to include all children in developing their

communication and language skills. During activities, they introduce descriptive words. For example, they ask children to feel different items in a bag and to talk about what they feel like.

- Staff act as good role models to the children. They listen when children talk and value what they say. Older children confidently hold conversations with staff and describe past events. Staff use effective questioning when communicating with children to extend conversations and build on children's learning.
- Staff encourage children's independence. They support children to look after their belongings and manage their own self-care needs effectively. For example, pre-school children hang their coats up and self-register when they arrive in the morning. They access the bathroom independently and manage their own personal needs. This helps them to be ready for starting school.
- Parents spoken to are very positive about the nursery and the work that staff do with their children. The manager has set up a welcoming environment at the entrance, with information displayed for parents. For example, they can borrow books to take home and share with their children. Explanations are displayed about why singing rhymes with children is beneficial for their communication and language development.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The leadership team and staff are alert to the risk factors that could make a child vulnerable. They recognise the signs that may suggest a child is unsafe in their home or the community. They know what to do if they have a child protection concern. They also know what to do should they have a concern about another member of staff. The manager provides regular opportunities for staff training in safeguarding. She confirms staff's knowledge through quizzes and questionnaires at staff meetings. The manager ensures the ongoing suitability of staff. Children play in a safe environment, that staff risk assess regularly.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- consider ways to fully involve pre-school children in routines, such as tidy up time, so that during these times children do not become disruptive
- strengthen staff's understanding of the curriculum and how young children learn, to raise their achievements to an even higher level.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY546317
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	10257467
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	0 to 4
Total number of places	48
Number of children on roll	68
Name of registered person	Castle Kindergarten Limited
Registered person unique reference number	RP546315
Telephone number	0191 3712895
Date of previous inspection	17 September 2019

Information about this early years setting

Castle Kindergarten registered in 2017. The nursery employs 13 members of childcare staff. Of these, all staff hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 2 or above, including one member of staff with qualified teacher status. The nursery opens from Monday to Friday, all year round. Sessions are from 7.30am until 6pm. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Lynne Pope

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 and inspector completed a learning walk together of all areas of the setting 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 manager and inspector carried out a joint observation of a small group activity and discussed staff's interactions with the children.
- The inspector spoke to staff at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their views.
- A meeting was held with the leadership team and the inspector.
- Parents and carers shared their views of the setting with the inspector.

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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