

Inspection of Harrietsham Preschool

St John the Baptist, Marley Road, Maidstone ME17 1AX

Inspection date: 10 November 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not applicable
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What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children demonstrate that they feel happy and secure at this unique setting. For example, on arrival, children happily separate from their parents at the church door and say goodbye. They know the routine well, as they place their belongings into different boxes. The atmosphere is calm and relaxing as children freely explore and choose what activities they engage with. They quickly settle into their learning and play.

Children make continued progress in their learning and development. The staff have high expectations for all children, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). For instance, they ensure that they differentiate their teaching to enable children's participation in all activities that take place. This is done in an inclusive way that supports children learning together. They develop a good understanding of their differences and what makes them unique.

Children behave well throughout their time at the setting. For example, children share and take turns as they cooperate with each other successfully during free play. They can be heard saying 'it's your turn' as they build towers with bricks. Relationships reflect a positive and respectful culture that impacts positively on children's emotional development and security.

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

- Staff know their children well. This enables them to plan an engaging curriculum that is built around their current interests and next steps in learning. For instance, children are engaged and motivated to learn as they explore colours, feelings and emotions. Children share their thoughts, such as 'I feel happy', with the practitioner. However, on occasions, staff do not allow children enough time to process information that is presented to them. Staff ask lots of questions without allowing children appropriate thinking time. This results in children not responding, which impacts on their communication and language development. The manager has already arranged training for all staff to support the quality of their interactions. She is confident that this will have a positive impact on the quality of teaching at the setting.
- Staff have high expectations for children's behaviour. For example, staff teach children about their emotions in an age-appropriate way. They enjoy sharing the story 'The Colour Monster', as they explore the meaning of different feelings. Staff consistently model positive language and, on occasions, give gentle reminders of the rules, such as 'walking feet inside'. Children respond well to adult requests. This has a great impact on children's well-being and character development, and is reflected in children's positive behaviour and conduct.
- The manager and her staff team have created an inclusive setting that values

diversity. For instance, children who speak English as an additional language make continued progress from their starting points, as their language development is well supported. However, their teaching of different cultures and faiths in the wider world needs to be expanded and improved. This will enable children to develop a better understanding and appreciation of people and families that are different, and prepare them for life in modern Britain.

- Children benefit from being physically active inside and outside every day. For example, children take part in daily 'music and movement' sessions. They are highly engaged as they learn to listen to simple instructions and move in various ways. The staff give clear and consistent messages to children that supports their understanding of healthy choices around food, rest and exercise. This supports children's physical and emotional health well.
- The manager has a clear and ambitious vision for providing high-quality inclusive care and education to all, including those with SEND. For example, the manager recognises weaknesses in teaching and the training needs of staff through regular observations and supervision. She implements targeted training to improve practitioners' knowledge and skills over time. This ensures that the quality of teaching is continually enhanced. This directly impacts on the good progress that children make across the seven areas of learning and development.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The manager and her staff team have a very good understanding of their duty to protect children in their care from harm and abuse. They can confidently talk about policies and procedures that are in place if they have any safeguarding concerns about a child or family. They have a good working knowledge of a range of safeguarding issues, such as female genital mutilation, preventing radicalisation and domestic abuse. The staff understand what to do if they have a concern about the manager or another staff member's conduct. The manager keeps accurate and up to date records that are stored securely. All staff receive regular safeguarding training to keep their knowledge up to date.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- improve further the quality of staff interactions with children, to allow them more time to process information that is presented to them
- build on opportunities to deepen children's awareness of different cultures and diversity further.

Setting details

Unique reference number	2606076
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10251693
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 5
Total number of places	30
Number of children on roll	26
Name of registered person	Harrietsham Playgroup Association Committee
Registered person unique reference number	RP902058
Telephone number	07897 821399
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

Harrietsham Preschool is situated in Maidstone, Kent. They operate Monday to Friday, 9am to 3pm, term time only. They offer funded places for two-, three- and four-year-olds. There are seven staff, including the manager, of whom four are level 3 qualified. All other staff are currently undertaking level 3 study.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Nicky Webb

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 inspector viewed the provision and discussed the safety and suitability of the premises.
- 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 spoke with the inspector during the inspection.
- The inspector spoke to several parents during the inspection and took account of their views.

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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