

Inspection of Castle Nursery

De Vere Primary School, Kirby Hall Road, Castle Hedingham, HALSTEAD, Essex
CO9 3EA

Inspection date:

29 November 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

Outstanding

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is outstanding

Children flourish in this welcoming nursery. They smile as they arrive, find their own names to self-register and confidently hang up their belongings. They energetically say goodbye to their parents and carers and run off happily into the enriching environment. The manager and staff are passionate about the knowledge they want children to achieve before going to school. Staff place significant focus on promoting children's independence from a young age, so that by pre-school they are given roles within the daily routine. For example, children are inquisitive and engrossed in helping staff to prepare the morning snack by filling up the water jugs and peeling fruits. This supports children to confidently take responsibility for their own actions and empowers them to display admirable attitudes to learning.

Children's behaviour is impeccable. Staff swiftly support children to manage conflicts independently and as a result, children show high levels of respect for each other. For example, children confidently discuss swapping gardening equipment with each other while in the mud kitchen to achieve their desired goal within the learning experience. Staff pose excellent questions for children to help them think critically, such as where they need to go and what equipment they will need for a bug hunt. Children squeal with delight and show high levels of satisfaction when finding worms in the mud pit, calling staff by name to showcase their findings. Children are provided with a wealth of outdoor learning throughout the day, which gives them with opportunities to develop healthy lifestyles. Staff teach children about 'healthy hearts' and children confidently discuss the effects exercise has on their bodies, which supports their own understanding of their well-being. Children fully cooperate as they dress for all weathers and then race outside excitedly.

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

- Staff implement a highly effective curriculum that is led by the children and provides them with endless possibilities to explore their own ideas. Staff skilfully incorporate children's interests into learning experiences to motivate them further. This allows children to become extremely confident and independent learners, ensuring they are well prepared for the next stage in their education. Children go on varied outings to explore their local community, such as visits to the farm, the local woodlands and the church. These experiences broaden children's knowledge of the world around them.
- Children's communication and language is incredibly well supported. Staff highly value the importance of listening to children's ideas and introduce new language to young children, such as, 'balancing', to extend learning experiences. Staff challenge older children to create their own stories to spark their imagination and curiosity, introducing story characters and discussing the way in which

stories are structured.

- A highly effective key-person system ensures that staff know their children exceptionally well. Staff show outstanding knowledge of children's individual needs and are skilful in their role in extending children's experiences. For example, children cuddle dolls in the home corner and staff use this as an opportunity to discuss different family structures and what makes them unique.
- Partnerships with parents are exceptional. Parents comment that staff are 'incredibly supportive' and that they feel safe and assured while children are at the nursery. Parents are thrilled with the communication and advice they receive regarding their children's learning and how to continue to support this learning at home. They comment on the outstanding progress their children make. Parents value the close bonds children have with staff and state how much they adore them.
- Children are incredibly confident and take immense pride in their achievements. For example, children invited the inspector to look at the artwork they had created and sit in the den that they had built. Staff continuously praise children's efforts during activities. Children communicate effectively with staff and each other, sharing their ideas and views. This highlights that children feel safe and valued within the nursery.
- Mathematics is weaved throughout the curriculum and activities of the day. For example, younger children confidently talk about the size of objects they build with. Older children spontaneously start counting the number of children on tables at lunchtime.
- The manager prioritises teamwork within the nursery. She actively seeks the views of all children, staff and parents who attend the nursery. All staff are kept up to date with areas of focus and the staff team regularly reflect each day about the care and education they provide their children. This ensures they maintain very high standards and teaching has a profound impact on children.
- Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are extremely well supported. The manager develops relationships with a number of professionals and ensures support for children is obtained swiftly. This enables all children to fulfil their potential.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The manager and staff have excellent knowledge of safeguarding children and it is a priority of all staff to keep children safe from harm. The designated safeguarding lead is proactive and persistent when seeking early help for families who attend the nursery. The manager provides all staff with regular safeguarding training to ensure their knowledge and understanding is up to date. Staff are aware of the actions to take if they have concerns regarding the conduct of a colleague. Staff teach children to learn about being safe, according to their age and ability. For example, children learn about how to safely cross the road when exploring the local community and how to respond when the fire alarm sounds.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY451282
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10233847
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	38
Number of children on roll	38
Name of registered person	Castle Hedingham Nursery Limited
Registered person unique reference number	RP911451
Telephone number	01787 463450
Date of previous inspection	23 February 2017

Information about this early years setting

Castle Nursery registered in 2012. The nursery employs nine members of childcare staff. Of these, six members of staff hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 2 or above. The nursery opens Monday to Friday, during school term times. Sessions are from 8.45am until 3.30pm. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector
Holly Todd

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 communicated with the inspector during the inspection.
- The inspector observed the quality of education being provided, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact that this was having on children's learning.
- Parents shared their views of the setting with the inspector.
- The inspector carried out joint observations of group activities with the manager.
- Staff spoke to the inspector during the inspection.
- 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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