

Inspection of St Oswald's Pre-School

St. Oswalds Park, Wren Close, Newton Aycliffe, County Durham DL5 4BG

Inspection date: 20 January 2023

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Good

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is outstanding

Children thrive in this inclusive and nurturing setting. They are extremely happy and settle with ease. Staff have transformed the learning environment. They skilfully ensure children experience awe and wonder through a carefully planned curriculum that ignites their curiosity for learning. For example, children are provided with excellent opportunities to develop their creative talents and express themselves through art and design in the setting's 'art studio'. Children explore a range of different mediums and artistic styles. They confidently ascribe meaning to their prints and gleefully discuss how mixing colours together creates new colours.

Staff act as incredible role models for respecting others, sharing and turn taking. Children play harmoniously together and their behaviour is exemplary. Children demonstrate excellent consideration and empathy. For instance, they beam with delight as they put on their high-visibility waistcoats when they are chosen to be 'helper of the day'. They excitedly exclaim to visitors that they are, 'Jack the guinea pig's helper today!'

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the manager and staff provided parents with videos and activity packs to enable them to continue children's learning and development at home. All children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) make rapid progress in their development.

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

- The dedicated manager has clear learning intentions and high expectations for all children. She provides staff with highly focused support and training to help them to develop their practice to an exceptional level. For example, all staff have recently completed qualifications in a language programme that helps to build children's speech through the use of signs and symbols. Children readily use this communication with their friends. Staff teach parents how to use this as well, further supporting children's communication at home.
- Staff ensure that children have the best possible start in life. They provide facilities, such as a food bank for families that enables children to have a healthy and varied diet. Children make their own soup at pre-school and take the recipe home, encouraging parents to be involved in this process.
- Staff are excellent at helping children to become critical thinkers and solve problems. For example, older children are fully engaged as they match the padlocks with the correct key to unlock a variety of different boxes. Toddlers are fascinated and become deeply absorbed as staff encourage them to help melt the ice to expose their favourite objects. Children demonstrate an excellent 'can-do' attitude.
- The highly passionate special educational needs coordinator develops effective

interventions that build on key observations made by all staff. For example, during a small group activity, children who need additional speech and language support demonstrate progress by repeating the words 'penguin', 'pepper' and 'pizza' and understanding that they all begin with the same sound. This shows evidence of previous interventions. Additional funding has been used to develop an inspiring sensory room.

- The pre-school is an integral part of the local community. For example, staff hold events such as 'pre-loved jumble sales'. Staff understand and value the various cultural backgrounds of the children. They make it a priority to understand children's home lives so they can meet the diverse needs of the children who attend the pre-school. Leaders signpost parents to additional support they can access for their children and families and provide access to a translator.
- Physical development is a strength within the setting. For example, children participate in weekly sports sessions to help them develop their gross motor skills to the highest level. All children and their parents accessed a visiting sports coach to experience high-quality games and physical activities.
- Partnerships with parents are exceptionally strong. Parents say that staff are very accommodating and foster an inclusive environment. They value the expertise that is shared with them to support children's learning at home. For example, they provide a reading library that children can borrow books from, to help them to develop a love of reading at home, as well as in the setting.
- The manager gathers the views of staff and parents and uses this information to help plan clear, continuous improvements. Supervision for staff is supportive and encouraging. Time is set aside for staff to complete essential paperwork, while leaders are committed to reducing the burden of paperwork on staff.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff have an outstanding understanding of how to promptly deal with any concern about a child. They provide information for parents about how to keep their children safe online. Effective systems are in place to identify any children or families who may need early help or support. They work closely with a wealth of other services to help keep children safe. Regular training ensures that all staff are knowledgeable and confident in fulfilling their responsibilities. Robust recruitment procedures ensure only those suitable to work with children do so. Children are taught about the importance of keeping themselves safe. They know that if they want to climb on the climbing wall then they must take turns and not push one another in case they fall off.

Setting details

Unique reference number	314174
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	10264890
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	2 to 4
Total number of places	52
Number of children on roll	72
Name of registered person	Great Aycliffe Town Council
Registered person unique reference number	RP519426
Telephone number	07974 704 213
Date of previous inspection	29 June 2017

Information about this early years setting

St Oswald's Pre-School registered in 1992 and is located in Newton Aycliffe, County Durham. The pre-school employs eight members of childcare staff. All staff hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 or above, including the manager and deputy manager who hold a level 6 qualification. The pre-school opens from Monday to Friday, during term time. Sessions are from 8.45am until 3.30pm. The pre-school provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Claire Crumpton

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 pre-school and discussed the early years curriculum.
- Children told the inspector about their friends and what they like to do when they are at pre-school.
- The inspector talked to staff at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The inspector spoke with the manager about the leadership and management of the pre-school.
- The special educational needs coordinator spoke to the inspector about how they support children with SEND.
- 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 inspector carried out a joint observation of a group activity with the deputy manager.
- The inspector spoke to several parents during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The inspector looked at relevant documentation and reviewed evidence of the suitability of staff working in the pre-school.

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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