

Inspection of Penenden Heath Pre-School

Penenden Heath Social Hall, Penenden Heath, Penenden Heath, MAIDSTONE, Kent
ME14 2DH

Inspection date: 19 January 2023

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	Good
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What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children demonstrate they feel happy and safe in their pre-school. Friendly and approachable staff greet children on arrival. Children independently hang up their coat and change their shoes. During carpet time each child signs 'good morning' to their friends before they rush off to play. Staff constantly reflect to ensure that activities cover all areas of learning. The environment is purposefully arranged to meet each child's interests and needs. For example, clothes in the role-play area are carefully selected to help develop fine motor skills. Children can learn how to use zips, buttons and poppers, which promotes their independence.

Children are highly motivated learners who are confident to speak to staff and visitors. They are proud to show off their artwork and receive praise. There are opportunities all day to access the large outdoor area. Its design allows children to explore and experiment in a safe space. For example, children discover ice that has formed overnight and try to work out how to break it up. They use different tools and then place chunks in the pizza oven, explaining that ovens get hot so it will melt the ice. Staff have high expectations for all children to make good progress.

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

- The management team are highly reflective. They look at what works in the setting and how they can improve. Staff feel valued. Managers use team meetings to encourage staff to share ideas and best practice. The introduction of a loose-parts area helps children to develop their imagination.
- Staff use mealtimes as a wonderful opportunity to engage children in conversation. They talk about their families and what is in their packed lunch box. Children demonstrate their growing independence by clearing away their own things. They then wash up and dry plates and utensils.
- Children have the opportunity to learn about what makes them unique. Parents of children who are learning English as an additional language come into the setting to read stories in their home language. Children feel valued as they celebrate their own language and culture.
- Children learn some good hygiene routines. They wash their hands after using the toilet and before meals. However, children do not always cover their mouths when they cough, or use readily available tissues to blow their noses.
- Parents feedback positively about the caring and nurturing staff, and value the support they receive. Parents know what their children are learning via online journals and share what children do at home. This means that staff can use children's interest to plan activities in the setting.
- Staff are quick to respond when children need help managing their behaviour. For example, when children argue, staff encourage them to share. They then discuss how arguing made them feel. This allows children to explore their

feelings and supports their emotional well-being.

- Children with additional needs receive exceptional support. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) works with parents and external professionals. In partnership they plan appropriate activities to support children's progress. The manager carefully considers how to spend funding to have the most impact for children. For instance, employing extra staff so children can have one-to-one support when needed, so they can fully access the curriculum.
- Staff focus on developing communication and language for all children. For example, they use Makaton signing and picture cards to help those who need more support. However, on occasion, staff ask too many closed questions. They do not always give children time to process information. This means that sometimes children do not have opportunities to develop their speech and language skills.
- Children's behaviour is very good. They work collaboratively to help solve problems. For example, when a car becomes stuck in a large tube children work together to lift up one end so that the car can roll out. The children then experiment on raising the tube to different heights, and squeal with delight as a toy spider makes its way down the tube. This promotes teamwork and problem-solving skills.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are clear of their responsibilities to keep children safe. They undertake safeguarding training which includes issues such as female genital mutilation, peer-on-peer abuse and domestic violence. Staff know how to recognise if a child is at risk of abuse and confident to report any concerns. This means that children and families receive support without delay. The manager has implemented robust risk assessments, both indoors and outdoors, so children are safe exploring their environment. There is a rigorous safer recruitment procedure in place. All staff have checks to ensure that they are suitable to work with children when they start and ongoing throughout their employment.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- strengthen children's knowledge of how to manage and learn about good hygiene
- strengthen communication and language strategies to support children's developing language skills.

Setting details

Unique reference number	127441
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10265120
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	24
Number of children on roll	52
Name of registered person	Penenden Heath Pre School Committee
Registered person unique reference number	RP910805
Telephone number	07941 055 782
Date of previous inspection	25 May 2017

Information about this early years setting

Penenden Heath Pre-School registered in 1994 and is situated in Maidstone, Kent. The pre-school is open each weekday from 8.45am to 2.45pm, during term time only. The pre-school employs 10 staff, eight of whom have relevant childcare qualifications to level 3 or above. The provider receives funding to provide free early education for children aged two, three and four years.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Jennie Winchcombe

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the pre-school 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 setting.
- 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.
- The inspector spoke to children, to find out about their time at the setting.
- The inspector talked to staff at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The SENCo spoke to the inspector about how they support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The inspector observed the quality of education being provided, both indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact that this was having on children's learning.
- The inspector carried out joint observations of group activities with the manager.
- Parents shared their views of the setting with the inspector.
- The inspector looked at relevant documentation and reviewed evidence of the suitability of staff working in the nursery.

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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