

Inspection of Hedgehogs Hempstead

Hempstead Village Hall, 169 Hempstead Road, Hempstead, Gillingham ME7 3QG

Inspection date: 24 January 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not applicable

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children clearly demonstrate that they feel happy and safe in the homely environment that is created at the nursery. For instance, on arrival, children quickly separate from their parents as they are greeted by the enthusiastic and welcoming staff team. They freely explore the stimulating activities that have been set up to provoke curiosity and awe. Children quickly engage in their learning through play.

Children display good behaviour and have positive attitudes to learning. For example, in the home corner, they freely explore an array of resources, such as china teacups and saucers. Children understand how to use these items safely as they role play together. They become highly engaged in their play as they concentrate and play well with each other.

Children make continued progress from their starting points. There are high expectations for all children, including children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). For instance, additional funding is used by staff to provide tailored care and education. This enables all children to have equal access to the curriculum and ensures that there are no barriers to learning. Children are more than ready for their next stage of learning, especially school.

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

- Staff plan an exciting curriculum that engages children well. For instance, children thoroughly enjoy the responsibility of helping to prepare fresh vegetables for their lunch daily. They learn to use knives and peelers safely as they chop and peel a variety of vegetables by themselves. Staff talk to children over lunch about their achievements as they enjoy the food that they made together. Children develop good skills across the seven areas of learning and development and are more than ready for their next stage of learning.
- Staff and leaders create an environment that is well planned to support their curriculum and meet the needs of most children, including children with SEND. Older children are highly engaged and lead their own learning while staff support and extend their knowledge successfully. However, there are some occasions when staff interactions are not fully successful at helping younger children to learn the skills they need to develop their own thoughts and ideas during their play. This has a negative impact on children's personal and social development and developing confidence.
- Staff have high expectations for children's behaviour and conduct. For example, they demonstrate this during learning opportunities, such as during daily forest school activities. Children walk very well and understand how to keep themselves safe as they cross the roads to reach the local woodlands. Staff and children discuss the rules, such as when staff ask, 'What are we not allowed to

eat at forest school?' Children instinctively know the rules as they all quickly reply, 'berries and mushrooms'. Children develop a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe as they freely explore the woodlands, responding promptly to staff requests.

- Staff generally support children well to be independent in their self-care routines. For instance, staff guide children to independently clean their noses and wash their hands with wipes. However, there are some occasions when staff do things for children that they could easily manage for themselves. For instance, on occasion, staff carry children to different areas of the nursery and do not recognise when they can encourage children to walk independently. This impacts negatively on children's personal development as staff are not consistently promoting their independence.
- Partnerships with parents are a real strength of the nursery. For example, parents receive regular and consistent information about their children's progress throughout the year. The provider shares information in a variety of ways to ensure that all parents have equal access in a timely manner to important issues about the organisational arrangements. Parents consistently share positive feedback about the 'supportive and approachable' staff team, and they comment how 'settled and happy' their children are to attend the nursery every day. These strong relationships impact positively on the outcomes for children and their families.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The leadership team at the nursery has a good understanding of its duty to protect children from abuse and harm. Leaders implement thorough recruitment and induction programmes to ensure that staff are suitable to work with children and understand their safeguarding responsibilities. This is continually monitored through ongoing suitability checks during staff supervision sessions. Staff have a good understanding of a diverse range of safeguarding issues and concerns that may impact on the safety and well-being of children in their care. They can confidently talk about the company whistle-blowing policy and know who and when to refer to if they have any concerns.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- support staff to interact with younger children more effectively and give them the skills to develop their own ideas during play
- review opportunities to encourage children to complete routine tasks for themselves.

Setting details

Unique reference number	2630757
Local authority	Medway
Inspection number	10259106
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	42
Number of children on roll	83
Name of registered person	Hedgehogs Childcare (Kent and Medway) Ltd
Registered person unique reference number	2630759
Telephone number	01634 953743
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

Hedgehogs Hempstead is a pack-away nursery situated in the village of Hempstead, Kent. It is one of three settings owned by Hedgehogs Childcare Ltd. The provision re-registered in 2021. It offers sessional day care from 8.30am to 4pm, Monday to Friday. It offers funded childcare places for two-, three- and four-year-olds. It employs 11 staff, six of whom hold relevant childcare qualifications at level 3 or above.

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 deputy manager, manager, nominated individual and inspector completed a learning walk together of all areas of the nursery and discussed the early years curriculum.
- Children spoke to and communicated with the inspector during the inspection.
- The inspector talked to staff at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The inspector spoke with the nominated individual about the leadership and management of the setting.
- The special educational needs coordinator spoke to the inspector about how they support children with SEND.
- 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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