

Inspection of Castle Pre-School Ltd

The Community Building, Court Lane Junior School, Hilary Avenue, Cosham,
PORTSMOUTH PO6 2PP

Inspection date: 23 February 2023

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Overall effectiveness at previous
inspection

Good

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision requires improvement

Children do not always receive good quality education. Not all staff have the required skills to help children make good progress in their learning and development. At times, activities are not well planned, and staff do not always ensure they build on children's learning according to their age and stage of development. Despite this, children are keen to join in and engage in activities. Children form close attachments with the caring staff and have developed positive relationships with each other. Overall, children are happy, confident and settle quickly. They collect their named photo to register attendance and hang up their coats and book bags. This helps them to develop their skills in independence.

Children use their initiative as they play together. For instance, children use their imagination while filling up containers with different colour blocks and crystals. They comment that they are making 'rainbow drinks' and 'cups of ice'. They learn to play cooperatively with each other. However, staff do not consistently adopt effective strategies for managing unwanted behaviour. This means that children do not always understand what is expected of them. Children develop an interest in books and stories. For example, during group story time, children listen with interest, repeat phrases and answer questions. This helps to develop their skills in literacy.

Staff praise children's efforts, which builds their confidence and self-esteem. During a cooking activity, children confidently add and mix ingredients together. Children show others what they have created and are proud of their achievements.

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

- Leaders and staff ensure that children are well cared for in a safe environment. However, the manager does not ensure that staff receive effective supervision and training to improve their teaching skills so that teaching is consistently good or better.
- Staff know children well. They understand what children enjoy and use this information to plan activities. However, they do not tailor the planning to children's individual needs to help ensure they make the best possible progress. They provide a rich variety of resources for children to play with, but do not consistently ensure that children are engaged in purposeful learning. For example, during activities, staff do not always interact effectively with children to help extend their learning. This means that not all children make the best progress they are capable of.
- Parents praise leaders and staff. They state that children are happy and enjoy activities that staff provide. Staff keep parents up to date with their children's progress and daily activities. Parents feel supported by staff who provide help

with potty training and home-learning activity ideas.

- Staff ensure that children have access to fresh air and exercise. They learn how to take turns and manage risks while using the slide and gain an understanding or how to keep themselves healthy. For instance, children learn about good oral hygiene through activities designed to help children practise cleaning teeth.
- The manager is the pre-school's special educational needs coordinator (SENCo). She works with staff to identify children who require extra support. She provides guidance to parents on self-referrals through health visitors. This ensures that children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are able to access support from other professionals.
- Overall, children behave appropriately. However, staff are not always consistent in their approach to managing unwanted behaviour. Children are not always provided with clear guidance regarding acceptable behaviours. As a result, some poor behaviours are not addressed effectively. This means that children do not always understand boundaries and what is expected of them.
- The manager recognises the impact that COVID-19 has had on children's learning and development. Staff plan group activities to introduce children to new language. For example, staff encourage children to talk about season changes and weather patterns during group time. This helps to support their skills in communication and language.
- The manager has established secure links with the local infant school. Reception teachers visit the pre-school and staff share information on children's progress with the school. This supports children's transition to school and helps to improve outcomes for children.
- Children develop an understanding of the world through interacting with nature. For example, children learn about farming through interactions with farm animals. Children learn what makes them unique and make connections between cultural similarities. This helps children develop an understanding and tolerance of different cultures, faiths, and beliefs.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff understand the signs and symptoms of abuse and know who to contact if they are concerned for a child's safety. Staff keep their knowledge of safeguarding up to date through training. Daily safety checks of the setting are carried out to ensure hazards are identified to ensure risks are minimised. Staff make sure the premises are secure so that children cannot leave unsupervised and unwanted visitors cannot gain access. The manager is proactive in monitoring attendance to establish why children are absent.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

To meet the requirements of the early years foundation stage, the provider must:

	Due date
improve staff understanding of curriculum intentions to enable them to focus specifically on what children need to learn next, to ensure that activities are suitably challenging for all children, including children with SEND	22/02/2024
focus support for staff, including less qualified or experienced staff, on enhancing their teaching skills, so that teaching is consistently good or better.	22/02/2024

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

- set clear expectations for children's behaviour to help them to understand what is expected of them and to ensure that all children, including children with SEND can fully engage in learning.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY378932
Local authority	Portsmouth
Inspection number	10263614
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	16
Number of children on roll	22
Name of registered person	Castle pre-school ltd
Registered person unique reference number	RP527715
Telephone number	07724110966
Date of previous inspection	8 May 2017

Information about this early years setting

Castle Pre-School opened in 1997 and registered with Ofsted in 2001. It is located in Cosham, Portsmouth. The pre-school is open from 8.30am to 3pm, Monday to Friday, during school terms. The pre-school receives funding to provide free early education for children aged two, three and four years old. There are four staff employed to work with the children. Staff qualifications range from level 6 to level 2.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Loretta Murphy

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 the inspector completed a learning walk together of all areas of the pre-school and discussed the early years curriculum.
- The inspector viewed the provision and discussed the safety and suitability of the premises.
- Children spoke with the inspector during the inspection.
- 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 SEND.
- The inspector carried out joint observations of group activities with the manager.
- The inspector gathered the views of parents.

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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