

Inspection of Country Mice Nursery

Station Road, Cowfold, Horsham, West Sussex RH13 8DA

Inspection date: 23 February 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	Good
--	------

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children receive a very warm welcome on arrival at the nursery. This helps them to feel valued and creates a very positive start to their day. The effective key-person system helps new children to settle into nursery routines, which supports their emotional well-being. Children demonstrate that they feel safe, secure and confident in the nursery environment. They are very independent. They confidently place their coats on hooks and select their slippers. They know where to store their lunch box and self-register their arrival. They make independent choices from the wide range of play resources available and show positive attitudes to learning. They display good manners and behaviours.

Children show high levels of engagement for the range of activities on offer. For example, they carefully twist the top off toothpaste and carefully squeeze the paste on to their toothbrush. They talk about the importance of brushing their teeth to remove germs. This develops their knowledge of oral hygiene. Children have good opportunities to play outside. They relish opportunities to explore the outdoor kitchen, paint at the easel and ride their bikes around the roadway, which develops their physical skills. They learn about road safety, enjoying a visit from the local lollipop person. They talk to each other about the importance of stopping, waiting and looking before crossing the road safely.

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

- Managers are inspiring leaders and positive role models to practitioners and apprentices. They have a clear vision of what they want children to learn and how to build on children's learning step by step. They adapt and change activities to meet the individual needs of children. The range of activities practitioners provide have clearly defined learning intentions. Practitioners comment that they are happy in their role and have good opportunities for their own professional development.
- Parents speak highly of the nursery. They praise the support their children receive. Parents feel involved in their children's learning and enjoy the use of communication books. This gives them opportunities to share home events and exchange information. Parents comment positively about how their children enjoy the responsibility of being a helper, which develops their confidence and gives them a sense of belonging.
- There is a strong focus on developing children's literacy skills. Children enjoy writing for a purpose, and practitioners offer many opportunities for them to do this. Children use clipboards to take orders in their pretend café and make notes when playing outdoors. They talk about what they have written, confidently sharing their thoughts and ideas.
- Children are developing their personal, social and emotional skills. They show

respect to each other during adult-led and child-initiated learning. They enjoy scooping up sand using a range of implements and place vehicles on ramps, predicting what will happen next. However, at times, too many children want to participate in some activities, and this is not always managed consistently by practitioners. This impacts on children's enjoyment and learning experiences.

- Support for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and their families is a particular strength of the nursery. Practitioners quickly identify where children may need additional support and seek prompt help from a range of professionals. They follow targeted plans and provide speech and language focus sessions. This helps to make sure that any gaps in children's learning are closed, which gives them the best possible start in life.
- There is a strong emphasis on promoting inclusive practice. Children enjoy visits to a farm to experience the arrival of spring lambs and develop their understanding of how others in the community live. They visit allotments to learn about how vegetables are grown and harvested. This helps children to value each other's individuality and to learn about healthy food choices.
- Practitioners form respectful relationships with children. They play alongside children to offer guidance and hold conversations with them. However, on occasion, practitioners do not make the best use of their interaction with children to expand conversations and give children time to think through their answers. This does not always extend children's thinking and communication and language skills even further.
- Practitioners incorporate mathematics into children's play in interesting ways. Children explore shape and compare quantity within the story of 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar'. Practitioners provide a range of materials so that children of different ages and abilities can be creative and follow their own thoughts and ideas.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The manager and committee ensure that robust vetting and recruitment procedures are in place. They regularly monitor the ongoing suitability of practitioners during regular supervision and annual appraisals. This ensures all practitioners are suitable and remain suitable for their role. Practitioners complete safeguarding training. They demonstrate a good knowledge of the signs and symptoms of harm. They are confident to escalate their concerns about a child's welfare or if an allegation is made against them or a colleague. Information about relevant safeguarding matters, such as online safety, is shared with parents to raise awareness. Staff carry out risk assessments daily to ensure the equipment and resources used are safe.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- support practitioners to make even better use of their interactions with children to extend their thinking and develop their communication and language skills even further
- review the organisation of some activities to ensure children can participate fully and gain the intended knowledge and skills.

Setting details

Unique reference number	113450
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	10263714
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	2 to 4
Total number of places	22
Number of children on roll	32
Name of registered person	Cowfold Pre-School Playgroup Committee
Registered person unique reference number	RP905665
Telephone number	01403 864011
Date of previous inspection	10 May 2017

Information about this early years setting

Country Mice Nursery registered in 1992 and is adjacent to St Peter's Primary School in Cowfold, West Sussex. The nursery is open from 8am to 5.30pm, term time only. The nursery also operates a before- and after-school club from 8am to 9am and 3pm to 5.30pm. The provider receives funding for the provision of free early education for children aged two, three and four years. The nursery employs five staff, of whom four hold an appropriate early years qualification at level 3.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Janet Thouless

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 the curriculum and what they want children to learn.
- The deputy manager spoke to the inspector about how they support children with SEND.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation of a group activity with the manager.
- The inspector looked at relevant documentation and reviewed evidence of the suitability of practitioners working in the nursery.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents and their written feedback.

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.

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk

This publication is available at <https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2023