

# Inspection of Whistlewood Forest School

Whistlewood Common, Opposite Dovesite Business Park, Melbourne, Derbyshire  
DE73 8HS

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Inspection date: 28 February 2023

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

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

### The provision is good

Children show excitement when they arrive at the outdoor setting and greet their friends. The learning environment inspires children's curiosity. Children are keen to lead their own play. They explore the forest area and investigate the activities staff provide. Children use critical-thinking skills to build a waterslide with pieces of a drainpipe. They discuss with their friends how to use rocks to angle the pipes and change the direction of the water flow.

Children are confident to engage in conversation with their friends. They join discussions and use a 'talking stick' to describe their feelings and talk about their favourite things. The bonds between children and staff are strong. Children seek out their key person for comfort and reassurance. They know the rules of the forest setting and understand how to keep themselves safe. Children enjoy using long forks to toast bread over the fire at snack time. They explain the rules of the firepit and know they need to remain seated while waiting their turn. Children develop their physical skills as they balance on beams. They are resilient and are quick to try again if they fall. Children behave well.

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

- The provider is also the manager of the setting. She has a clear intent for the curriculum and what she wants children to learn. The setting has a strong focus on nature-based learning. Staff encourage children to learn about the world around them. They understand the curriculum well and show this through their effective delivery of activities.
- Children are independent in their selection of activities. They choose from the loose parts that nature provides to extend their play. Children independently find their lunch boxes and manage their own needs during lunchtime. However, independence is not always consistently promoted across the setting. For example, when children ask for help to put on their gloves, staff are quick to do this for them rather than teaching them how to do it themselves.
- Children show a good understanding of the rules and boundaries of the setting. Staff support children to keep themselves safe. They encourage children to take calculated risks. Children move around the setting carefully and understand the safety rules when around the firepit and using tools.
- Children's imagination is well supported. Staff participate and join in with children's role play while skilfully extending their learning. When children decide to make imaginary cakes in the mud kitchen, staff suggest writing a shopping list to buy the ingredients they need. They encourage children to make marks with chalk to represent the different items. Staff support children's pretend play as they pretend to drink cups of tea that the children make.
- Staff promote a love of reading. They use books to introduce new concepts and

vocabulary to the children. For example, staff use the words 'diurnal' and 'nocturnal' when describing different animals within a story. Children learn to understand what this means. They confidently talk about animals and their habitats, such as owls and foxes.

- Staff provide tailored care for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. They use a variety of strategies to support children's learning, such as projects like 'Every Child a Talker'. This ensures that children are well supported with their speech and language and make the best possible progress. The provider works closely with external agencies to seek additional guidance.
- Staff report high levels of well-being. The provider uses her early years knowledge to provide feedback to staff during supervision. She provides coaching and guidance to improve staff practice. Staff undertake training courses, such as behaviour management. This helps to increase their skills and confidence with the children.
- Parents say they are happy with the care their children receive. They speak highly of the setting and the unique opportunities staff provide. Parents know what daily activities their children participate in. However, staff do not share children's individual next steps in learning. As a result, parents are not always aware of how to further extend their children's learning at home.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff understand the signs that indicate a child may be at risk of harm or abuse. They know their responsibilities to safeguard all children. Staff understand the referral procedures they need to follow should they have a concern about a child or the conduct of another member of staff. The provider has robust procedures in place to ensure the safe recruitment of staff. Staff conduct thorough daily risk assessments to keep the children safe. They identify and share clear boundaries within the forest area, which the children follow. The provider ensures that staff complete regular training to maintain a good understanding of all aspects of safeguarding.

## What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- enable children to further develop their independence during daily tasks and self-care routines
- increase the information shared with parents to ensure they are aware of their child's progress and how they can continue to support their learning at home.

## Setting details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	2610949
<b>Local authority</b>	Derbyshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10263094
<b>Type of provision</b>	Childcare on non-domestic premises
<b>Registers</b>	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
<b>Day care type</b>	Sessional day care
<b>Age range of children at time of inspection</b>	2 to 6
<b>Total number of places</b>	18
<b>Number of children on roll</b>	24
<b>Name of registered person</b>	Phillips, Rosalyn
<b>Registered person unique reference number</b>	2610951
<b>Telephone number</b>	07742623146
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not applicable

## Information about this early years setting

Whistlewood Forest School registered in 2020 and is located in Melbourne, Derbyshire. The setting opens Tuesday and Wednesday, during term time. Sessions are from 8.30am until 4pm. Additional sessions are offered during the school holidays. The setting employs four members of childcare staff. Of these, three hold appropriate childcare qualifications at level 3 or above. The setting provides funded early years education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

## Information about this inspection

### Inspector

Rachel Barsby-Robinson

## 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 inspector viewed the provision and discussed the safety and suitability of the setting.
- The provider joined the inspector on a learning walk and talked to the inspector about their curriculum and what they want their children to learn.
- Children spoke to the inspector about what they enjoy doing when they are at the setting.
- Staff spoke to the inspector during the inspection.
- The inspector observed the quality of education being provided and assessed the impact this was having on children's learning.
- Parents shared their views of the setting with the inspector.

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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