

Inspection of Stomping Grounds Forest Kindergarten at Gibside

National Trust, Gibside, Burnopfield, Newcastle Upon Tyne NE16 6BG

Inspection date: 24 March 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 thoroughly enjoy their time in the forest kindergarten. They enjoy climbing trees, swinging in hammocks or walking along ropes. Other children enjoy exploring insects or talking about the birds and trees. Parents comment that their children come home covered in mud, but they have had a superb day. They feel that they are highly knowledgeable about the natural world and can identify trees, birds and flowers. Staff have high expectations for children's learning. As well as teaching children about the natural world, staff talk about the sounds in children's names. Older children talk confidently about numbers and explain how staff can change the number 12 on the whiteboard to 10.

Children develop an in-depth understanding of how they can keep themselves safe. For example, they learn to use tools safely as they cut sticks. Staff have clear rules in the base camp, which children consistently follow. When children run in the base camp, staff ask them how they stay safe around the fire. Children know they need to sit down and respond immediately. Staff take time to explain why the rules are in place. An example of this is when they remind children that sticks are not allowed in the circle in case they hurt their friends.

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

- The manager supports staff to develop their knowledge and skills further. For example, she is currently supporting staff to achieve a relevant level 3 qualification, or further training on outdoor initiatives. Staff comment that they are well supported and know they can talk to the manager or other staff about anything.
- Staff support children's communication exceptionally well. For example, they get down to children's level and comment on what they are doing. Staff follow children's lead. This is evident when children use socks to make a puppet and staff follow, using their sleeve as a puppet. Staff use good questions to help children to express their thoughts and ideas as they explain why they think something has happened.
- Children develop a good understanding of managing their personal hygiene. Staff have developed innovative techniques to provide hygienic handwashing facilities. Children learn to use soap and water canisters to rinse their hands. They know they must wash hands before eating.
- Staff talk to children about their overall health. For example, they remind children about routines, such as brushing their teeth. They talk to children about food that is good for them. However, staff do not consistently reinforce messages about healthy eating, including dental health. For example, children return to base camp and help themselves to their snacks or lunch when they are hungry. While lunches and snacks are generally healthy, staff do not always

notice what children are eating and miss opportunities to reinforce messages about food that is not good for them, particularly sugary snacks.

- The manager and staff work with some settings that children attend. However, they have not yet thought about ways that they can work in partnership with all other settings that children attend. As a result, staff are not able to obtain sufficient information about children's learning and development. This means that staff are not yet able to maximise children's learning.
- Children concentrate well. They thoroughly enjoy playing with water and soap in the mud kitchen. Children are engrossed as they make potions for children and staff. Other children show deep concentration as they help staff to prepare sticks for the fire or find out how many children would like a bowl of porridge.
- Staff support children's learning well. They help children to understand a greater awareness of how they are feeling and to identify where in their body they feel uncomfortable. For example, staff help children to identify that their foot is hurting and look at solutions for this. They seize opportunities to extend children's learning. For example, when children find a clothes tag, staff encourage children to look at the letters and numbers on it. Children make good progress.
- Staff support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities effectively. They work well with a range of professionals from health. For example, they work with professionals from occupational therapy to discuss adjustments that they can make to the environment. This helps children to regulate their emotions.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Children are safe. Staff have thought carefully about how they use the woodland space. They have identified clear boundaries and ensure that children are well supervised at all times. Staff use good communication systems, including via walkie-talkies, to ensure that staff are in contact with each other at all times and know where children and staff are. Staff have a good understanding of the signs and symptoms that may suggest a child is suffering from abuse. They know the procedures to follow and act swiftly when they have concerns. Staff provide advice and support to children and their families.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- give clear and consistent messages regarding healthy eating and oral hygiene, particularly at mealtimes and snack times
- gather more information about children's learning from other settings which children attend.

Setting details

Unique reference number	2630973
Local authority	Gateshead
Inspection number	10281152
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register
Day care type	Sessional day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	2 to 7
Total number of places	18
Number of children on roll	34
Name of registered person	Stomping Grounds Forest School North East CIC
Registered person unique reference number	2612859
Telephone number	07736990489
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

Stomping Grounds Forest Kindergarten at Gibside registered in 2021 and is located in Gibside National Trust in Burnopfield, Tyne and Wear. The setting employs five members of childcare staff. Of these, one holds an appropriate early years qualifications at level 3, one is a qualified teacher, one holds early years professional status and one is an early years teacher. The setting opens from Monday to Friday during term time. Sessions are from 9am until 3pm. The setting provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector
Elizabeth Fish

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the setting 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 showed the inspector around the setting. She explained where children are allowed to access and how they keep children safe.
- The inspector spoke to parents to gather their views on the setting.
- The manager explained how they organise the curriculum and how they keep children safe.
- The inspector spoke to children and staff at appropriate times during the inspection.
- The inspector observed children playing and evaluated the quality of their learning.
- The manager evaluated an activity with the inspector.
- The inspector viewed a range of documents, including those relating to staff's suitability.
- The manager explained how she manages the provision.

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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