

Inspection of Explorers

The Stables, Stephensons Arms, Wylam NE41 8ED

Inspection date: 3 May 2023

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

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is outstanding

The manager and staff have a clear passion for supporting children's learning in this outdoor nursery. Their practice is based on clear principles that are understood and implemented by staff. The priority when children start is to form very strong bonds with staff. Parents comment that it feels like their children are being cared for by family members.

Children learn to plan and lead their own learning. Staff are very knowledgeable and know intuitively how to support children to make rapid progress. For example, some children come from other settings, where they have found it difficult to settle. Staff are patient and recognise that children need a lot of love and reassurance to help them to bond with staff. Once they have developed these strong bonds with staff, children thrive. Parents share this view. One parent commented, 'The nursery has saved our family.' Staff have high expectations and provide children with very rich experiences. For example, children thrive in the woodland environment. They learn to keep themselves safe as they climb trees or use rope swings. They help each other as they hold the rope swing for others to use.

Children behave well. They treat each other with respect and share resources freely. They learn to listen to each other and respect each other's point of view. They listen to explanations that may challenge their viewpoints. For example, older children sometimes have set views on topics, such as dinosaurs, but listen to those of others.

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

- The manager and staff have thought carefully about the curriculum they offer. They have identified the skills they want children to learn. The very clear progression of skills is evident across the curriculum. For example, staff have identified the early skills children need to enable them to develop their literacy skills. Two-year-old children learn to concentrate for short periods, while older children learn about rhyming words and alliteration. This supports children to make excellent progress.
- Children are highly engaged in their learning and demonstrate consistently positive attitudes. Three-year-old children eagerly gather their friends to watch an experiment to make a volcano erupt. They show consistently high levels of engagement for their age, as they watch it happen over and over again.
- Staff read stories with excellent expression to excite children. Children thoroughly enjoy listening to stories. Staff seize opportunities to talk about the meaning of words, such as 'strong' and 'weak'. Their clear curriculum intent is evident throughout the story. High-quality interactions between staff focus

children's attention on words that rhyme and significantly contributes to children's learning. By the end of the story, children are incredibly confident to identify and talk about rhyming words.

- Staff support children's communication exceptionally well. Staff working with younger children introduce single words. Older children learn more complex vocabulary, such as 'herbivore' or 'hibernation'. Staff ask probing questions that give older children the opportunities to think about why things happen or how things work. For example, children express their thoughts about how volcanoes erupt and what the lava feels like.
- Staff support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) extremely well. The highly knowledgeable coordinator is exceptionally well supported by highly trained staff. Staff spend a lot of time building close relationships with children and helping them to manage and understand their emotions. Staff swiftly identify children who need extra support. Highly effective intervention sessions help them develop the skills they need. Children catch up rapidly.
- The manager provides focused and highly effective support to staff to enable them to develop their role further. For example, following recent training, lead staff working with two-year-old children now act as a liaison between parents and staff working with older and younger children. The manager coaches staff regularly to further strengthen their knowledge and skills. This ensures their subject knowledge continues to improve. Staff speak very highly of the support she provides.
- The manager uses funding effectively to ensure that children make the best possible progress. She uses the funding to ensure that children benefit from high adult-to-child ratios. She appoints a highly skilled workforce and this helps all children, including those with SEND, to make the best possible progress.
- Staff working with babies develop excellent relationships with children. This is evident as children run up to greet members of staff who have been off work. Staff are very calm and reassuring as they cuddle babies who are tired. For example, staff look at books and sing nursery rhymes to reassure them.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The manager and staff have an excellent understanding of how they can keep children safe. Doors into the building and the wooded outdoor classroom are secure. Staff supervise children carefully. They give children time to try to do things for themselves, for example climb trees, but check that they have remembered the safety rules. Staff are highly knowledgeable about the signs and symptoms that may indicate that a child may be suffering from abuse. The safeguarding lead checks staff knowledge regularly to ensure they keep their knowledge and skills up to date. Staff are well trained on the procedures to follow should they have any concerns about children's welfare.

Setting details

Unique reference number	2607502
Local authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	10263844
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	0 to 4
Total number of places	62
Number of children on roll	57
Name of registered person	Jefferson, Louise
Registered person unique reference number	2607501
Telephone number	07946607581
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

Explorers registered in 2020 and is located in Wylam. The nursery employs 10 members of childcare staff. All of these hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 or above, including four members of staff with qualified teacher status, including the manager who holds a further qualification at level 7. The nursery opens from Monday to Friday, all year round. Sessions are from 7am until 6pm. The nursery 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 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 showed the inspector around the nursery and explained how she organises the provision.
- The inspector observed children playing and learning and evaluated the impact on children's learning.
- The manager evaluated an activity with the inspector.
- The inspector talked to staff and children at appropriate times during the inspection.
- Parents spoke to the inspector and shared their views on the nursery.
- The inspector looked at a range of documentation, including those relating to staff suitability.
- The manager met with the inspector and explained how she manages the nursery and keeps children safe.

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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