

Inspection of Catkins Preschool

Tunbury Hall, Catkin Close, Chatham, Kent ME5 9HP

Inspection date: 20 April 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

Staff provide children with a consistent routine and, as such, children love attending their sessions at the pre-school. Staff regularly review routines and practice to enhance children's experiences at the pre-school. For instance, following the COVID-19 pandemic, children enter and exit the pre-school using two different exits. This helps create a more relaxing experience for the children.

Staff plan opportunities for children to access stimulating and engaging experiences all through the day. For instance, children enjoy exploring ice 'treasure hunting' activities. Staff encourage children to use language and learn new words such as 'petals' and 'stem'. Children engage so deeply with this activity that they want to explore it later in the day after the ice has melted. Children extend this activity by adding other items, such as mud and cars, to the tray. All children spend extended periods of time fully immersed in their play. Staff skilfully recognise when to intervene to offer individual children encouragement to join in. This is successful in managing children's feelings and behaviours, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Leaders provide a strong focus on building children's confidence. Children have opportunities that prepare them for the transition to primary schools. For instance, older children have targeted sessions called 'Rising Fives'. Children bring favourite toys from home and take turns to stand in front of their peers to talk about these. These opportunities enhance children's confidence and self-esteem.

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

- Leaders support staff to provide routines that encourage quality experiences for children. For instance, during circle time they consider the age groups and needs of children. Staff divide the children into two groups. This successfully enhances engagement from children with high levels of SEND. It also helps to ensure that staff meet the unique needs of all children.
- Leaders and staff engage well with other settings. They also liaise with other professionals that work with children. For instance, staff regularly share information with childminders who provide care for children who attend their pre-school. They also liaise with local schools to prepare for children's transitions. These strong partnerships help in meeting the needs of children, both within and beyond the pre-school. It also provides continuity in children's learning and development.
- Leaders have the required skills to further enhance their team's development. For instance, they regularly observe staff and provide feedback based on their observations. This supports staff's continuous professional development. It also equips them with the skills they require to fully meet the needs of children.

- Leaders use any additional funding to enhance their provision to support children's learning. For instance, they have bought resources to develop and meet children's sensory needs. Children, including those with SEND, begin to use new words, such as 'ice'. They confidently sing their favourite nursery rhymes. This enhances children's speech and language as well as the use of their imagination.
- Children confidently approach staff to share what they have learned with them. For instance, they bring toy cars to staff and successfully identify the colours, sizes and how many they have. They use descriptive words such as 'big', 'small' and 'red'. Children demonstrate what they know about the world around them.
- Children have secure bonds with their key persons. For instance, children who are settling into the pre-school sometimes cry, but they are confident to go to their key person for comfort. This helps children to regulate their own feelings easily. It also enhances their relationships within the pre-school, which helps them relax and enjoy their time and learning to the maximum.
- Staff encourage children to live a healthy lifestyle. They provide children with opportunities to engage in physically active play, both within and outside the pre-school. For instance, staff take the children on regular walks and outings within their community. They also encourage children to eat healthy meals at snack time by providing them with a wide variety of snacks and fruits. This facilitates good development in children and also creates an early awareness of making healthy food choices.
- While teaching overall is strong, there is sometimes less focus on promoting children's mathematical understanding. Staff use some opportunities, such as when children are scooping cereals into their bowls, to instigate counting. However, support for children in this area is inconsistent and children do not receive very much encouragement to count beyond two.
- Staff have longstanding and trusting relationships with parents. For instance, parents feed back about how well staff support their children's transition into the pre-school. This further enhances children's ability to settle and thrive within the pre-school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have the knowledge required to address any safeguarding concerns that arise within the setting. They ensure that all staff access mandatory training at regular intervals. Staff confidently share their understanding of various safeguarding scenarios, such as what they would observe in a child experiencing sexual abuse or at risk of radicalisation or female genital mutilation. They also know the procedure to follow in the event of an allegation being made against children's family members or any staff, including the manager.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- strengthen the support for children to develop their mathematical understanding, particularly their counting skills.

Setting details

Unique reference number	2711650
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10289741
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	53
Number of children on roll	53
Name of registered person	Phillips, Anne
Registered person unique reference number	2711648
Telephone number	07946631787
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

Catkins Preschool registered in 2013. It is located in Chatham, Kent. The pre-school is open term time only, Monday, Wednesday and Thursday from 8.45am to 3.30pm, and Tuesday and Friday from 8.30am to 3pm. The provider receives funding to provide free early education for children aged two, three and four years. The pre-school employs 10 members of staff, all of whom hold a relevant early years qualification at level 3 or above. The manager has qualified teacher status.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Toyin Aina

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the pre-school 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 spoke with staff, children and parents at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The inspector spoke with the nominated individual and the manager about the leadership and management of the setting.
- The inspector observed the quality of education being provided, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact that this was having on children's learning.
- The inspector looked at relevant documentation and reviewed evidence of the suitability of staff working in the pre-school.
- The inspector viewed the provision and discussed the safety and suitability of the premises.
- The owner and inspector completed a learning walk together of all areas of the pre-school and discussed the early years curriculum.

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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