

Inspection of Mains House Nursery

West Lane, Chester-le-Street, County Durham DH3 3HL

Inspection date:

18 May 2023

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Outstanding

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is outstanding

Children are highly motivated and eager to learn at this extremely welcoming nursery. They benefit from a wide range of challenging and innovative activities and experiences that staff know will interest and excite them. For example, children build a wormery and care for ducklings they watch hatch from eggs in an incubator. They use real tools as they help staff build planters at the nursery allotment. In these, children help plant radishes, peas and carrots. They help staff water and care for the plants and watch them grow.

Children confidently explore using all their senses, for example as they mix paint with rice to explore textures. Children play imaginatively as they pretend to make fruit teas using real tea leaves, herbs and lemons. Younger children mix flour and water to make dough. Staff provide them with rich opportunities to explore independently with natural and tactile materials and resources. For example, they choose and add fresh herbs, feathers, sticks and pom-poms to their dough creations.

Relationships between children and staff are superb. Staff are very caring, sensitive and kind. They act as excellent role models. Staff model how to talk and act respectfully. They encourage children to use manners and be kind to others.

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

- Staff implement the nursery's very strong and clear curriculum, which supports children to embed and build on their skills and knowledge, across all areas of learning. The quality of teaching is consistently high across the nursery.
- Children take part in enriching real-life experiences. For example, they learn first hand about the life cycles of frogs and insects. Children explore where food comes from as they plant seeds and grow vegetables during trips to the nursery allotment. Staff take children to the local supermarket and greengrocer to see how plants, similar to those they grow, are sold.
- Staff plan excellent support for children's physical development through rich opportunities for moving, stretching and climbing. Younger children develop balance as they splash in paddling pools. Older children build strength and flexibility through activities such as weekly swimming sessions.
- Children develop their smaller muscles and coordination through activities such as threading beads and using real tools in the garden. They wash their own hands and learn to use tongs to serve their food independently at mealtimes.
- There is outstanding support for children's developing communication skills. The manager uses additional funding superbly to support children's skills in this area. Staff have learned, through training, to encourage children to respond in detail to questions. This helps to strengthen their use of language and develop their

vocabularies.

- Children attend storytelling sessions, craft sessions and trips to the local library to help instil a love of stories. A lending library is in place for children to take books home to share.
- Staff encourage children to express themselves through arts and crafts and imaginative play. Each child has an 'artwork book', presented to parents when children leave. This captures the progress of their creations over the course of their time at the setting.
- Children benefit daily from fresh air and exercise. They enjoy healthy, home-made meals that are tailored to meet children's specific dietary needs. Children learn about healthy lifestyles, such as how to look after their teeth. They have rich opportunities to taste new foods they might not otherwise try.
- Partnership work is a real strength of the setting. Staff share detailed information with local schools. This helps ensure the move for children to the next stage of their learning is as smooth and well supported as possible.
- There is excellent support for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Staff work closely with other professionals in education and health to provide a very consistent and well-planned approach to support for children.
- Feedback from parents is excellent. Parents speak very highly of the setting. They say staff know their children very well. Parents say their children have developed rapidly in confidence and independence. They praise the 'exemplary communication' and 'frequent and in-depth' reviews staff provide on their children's progress.
- The manager and staff are very reflective. Staff in each room are encouraged to record their thoughts and ideas on children's learning and experiences. The manager values the views of staff and parents and uses them to inform continuous improvements.
- The manager provides excellent support for her highly qualified team. For example, staff attend whole setting training days to help upskill and strengthen their knowledge. The manager and nursery director are very clear in their ambitions for the nursery. Together with their staff, they are dedicated to the care of children and their future outcomes.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The manager and staff have an excellent understanding of their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding. They know what might concern them and the procedures to follow to keep children safe. The manager and staff keep themselves up to date with changes in legislation and all aspects of safeguarding through regular meetings and training. Staff know how to keep children safe on a daily basis. For example, they teach children how to use tools and utensils safely. Staff teach children how to assess their own risks. For example, they support children to judge what speed to take when riding on bikes down slopes in the nursery garden.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY551880
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	10285600
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 11
Total number of places	36
Number of children on roll	91
Name of registered person	Blue Sky Childcare Limited
Registered person unique reference number	RP551879
Telephone number	0191 3889048
Date of previous inspection	11 October 2017

Information about this early years setting

Mains House Nursery registered in 2017. The nursery employs 16 members of childcare staff. Of these, 11 hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 or above. Six members of staff hold a qualification at level 6, including two staff with qualified teacher status and one with early years teacher status. The nursery opens from Monday to Friday all year round. Sessions are from 7.30am to 6pm. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Julie Foers

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the nursery 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 discussed with the inspector how the nursery organises and plans the curriculum and experiences for children. The inspector viewed the inside and outside space used by the nursery.
- The inspector observed the quality of education during activities and assessed the impact on children's learning. The manager and the inspector evaluated an activity together.
- The inspector looked at a sample of the nursery's documents. This included evidence of training and suitability of staff.
- The inspector held discussions with the manager and staff. She took into account the views of parents.

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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