

Inspection of Ickwell Pre-School

Ickwell Village Hall, Ickwell Green, BIGGLESWADE, Bedfordshire SG18 9EE

Inspection date: 6 June 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Inadequate
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What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children are eager to come to pre-school. They arrive happy, confident, and ready to play. The well planned and interesting activities available, motivate children to learn. For example, children spend a considerable amount of time mixing water and rose petals to make potions. They show good perseverance to draw the water up into a pipette or syringe with their hands and are excited when they manage to achieve this. Children help to make their own play dough and use a range of tools, such as cutters and rolling pins, to make their creations. Activities, such as these, help to strengthen the muscles in children's hands in preparation for early writing.

Children have formed strong bonds with the staff that care for them. This helps them to feel safe and secure when attending the pre-school. Children seek out the staff to read them stories and help them in activities. Staff are kind and nurturing. They talk to children in a calm and gentle manner and support them with their well-being and emotions. Children actively explore the environment both inside and outside and enjoy playing with their friends. Older children invite younger children to join them in activities. They are a good influence in helping them to understand the rules and expectations of the pre-school, such as tidying away toys and taking turns.

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

- Since the last inspection, there have been changes to the management structure. Staff are very positive about the changes. They say they feel very supported and their well-being is fully considered. Incentives, such as a staff shout out box for their achievements, help staff to feel valued. The new management team have worked hard to meet the actions set at the last inspection. For example, all committee members are now known to Ofsted and an accurate record is kept of children's attendance.
- Staff are delivering a curriculum that has a strong focus on building children's independence and preparation for school. Children are consistently encouraged to have a go and to try to do things themselves. They fasten their own shoes, put on their coats and blow their noses. They independently dispose of tissues in the bin and wash their hands.
- Planning for children's learning has improved. There is now much more emphasis on what children need to learn next and how this is implemented. Activities are exciting and provide challenge for children and this has resulted in increased engagement and eagerness to learn. However, on occasions some staff do not always recognise all opportunities to extend children's learning further.
- The new manager reflects on the curriculum provided and the progress children are making. Staff are provided with meaningful professional development

opportunities to further their knowledge and skills. The manager is beginning to monitor the teaching practice of staff more closely. However, this is not yet rigorous enough to ensure teaching is at a consistently high level.

- Staff understand the importance of developing children's language and communication. They talk to children, ask them questions to develop thinking skills and introduce longer and more challenging words, such as overflowing and chrysalis. Children are actively encouraged to develop a love of books and reading. Welcoming and cosy book areas are available inside and outside and children listen intently as stories are read to them. Staff use resources such as story sacks, that help bring stories to life and enhance children's understanding.
- Partnerships with parents are very positive. Staff demonstrate a good understanding of all children's backgrounds and home lives and use this knowledge to support children's development. For example, there is a stronger focus on large physical play for children who may not have constant access to an outdoor space. Parents receive regular communication about their child's time in the pre-school and they speak very highly of the setting and staff.
- The manager and her staff team have high expectations for all children. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress in the pre-school. Staff understand the individual needs of these children very well and they provide a tailored approach to their care that helps children thrive. Staff work collaboratively with parents and other professionals to ensure children receive the best support possible before entering the next stage of their education.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff demonstrate a good understanding of their duty to keep children safe and can recognise the varied signs and symptoms of all types of abuse. They know the procedures for reporting their concerns about children and adults to designated safeguarding leads within the pre-school and to the appropriate authorities. Staff and the committee's suitability is checked and there are procedures in place to check ongoing suitability during their time at the pre-school.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- help staff to build on their interactions with children further to ensure they consistently extend and challenge children's learning
- monitor staff practice even more closely to raise the quality of teaching to the highest level.

Setting details

Unique reference number	219263
Local authority	Central Bedfordshire
Inspection number	10271663
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	33
Number of children on roll	48
Name of registered person	Ickwell Pre-School Committee
Registered person unique reference number	RP519001
Telephone number	01767 627742
Date of previous inspection	9 December 2022

Information about this early years setting

Ickwell Pre-School registered in 1992 and is managed by a voluntary committee. The setting is open from 8.15am until 5.15pm Monday to Wednesday, 8.15am until 4.15pm on a Thursday and from 8.15am until 3.15pm on a Friday, during term time only. There are nine staff members who work directly with the children; of these, seven hold relevant childcare qualifications at level 2 or above. The setting provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Carly Mooney

Inspection activities

- The inspector discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the provider and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the provider.
- The inspector observed the quality of education being provided, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact that this was having on children's learning.
- Staff spoke to the inspector during the inspection.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation of a group activity with the manager.
- Parents shared their views of the setting with the inspector.
- The inspector looked at relevant documentation and reviewed evidence of the suitability of staff working in the pre-school.
- The manager and the 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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