

Inspection of Harlequin Forest Pre-School (TW)

Aspens Charities Ltd, Cornford Lane, Tunbridge Wells TN2 4QU

Inspection date: 15 June 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

Children are safe, confident and incredibly happy at this inspiring pre-school setting. The inclusive and engaging environment allows children to develop close and effective relationships with the nurturing staff. This enables them to develop excellent emotional stability and gain a strong sense of belonging. Children are highly inquisitive and motivated to explore and learn. They have excellent opportunities to learn about nature and are taught to develop a great respect and appreciation for the natural world.

Children's behaviour is exemplary. Staff are excellent role models who have extremely high aspirations for all children. They provide plenty of praise and encouragement. This builds children's self-esteem and confidence to the highest level.

There is a real sense of fun in this pre-school environment. Children swing from rope swings in the trees and create musical instruments from various objects and materials found in their woodland area. During their play, staff skilfully extend the children's knowledge as they encourage them to use their thinking skills. For instance, staff ask, 'How do you think this hole was made in the tree trunk?'

Children experience awe and wonder when searching for minibeasts under logs using a magnifying glass. Staff are excellent at supporting children to make predictions about what they might find. Children show incredible empathy and care for living things, such as the newt they revisit after first discovering it the previous day.

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

- Children benefit from an exceptionally stimulating and varied curriculum. Staff are highly creative in planning exciting activities and experiences that successfully cover all the different areas of learning. Staff know children extremely well and have a deep knowledge of their interests, personal traits and what they need to learn next. It is evident that children are making extremely strong progress.
- Children who speak English as an additional language and children from disadvantaged backgrounds receive outstanding support and flourish in their development. The manager and staff go above and beyond to ensure that children and their families receive all the possible support available to them. This means that all children are helped to reach their full potential.
- The passionate manager and staff are highly reflective and constantly review their practice to make positive contributions to this outstanding provision. Staff have superb opportunities to enhance their professional development, and there

is strong commitment to mentoring and coaching staff to ensure consistency in the excellent quality of education.

- Children have excellent opportunities to learn how to keep themselves safe. Even in their newer woodland environment, they know the safety rules. Staff frequently talk to children to help reinforce these. For example, children learn to be vigilant and stop and check the 'deer crossing' area before proceeding forward. They talk about identifying the boundaries and know the signal to gather as a group during the session. Children are extremely confident in their own abilities. They take and manage calculated risks. For instance, they carefully consider how sturdy the structures are before climbing on them.
- Staff are highly focused on developing children's communication and language skills. Children confidently use language to express their thoughts and feelings. They are introduced to a breadth of vocabulary as they play, such as 'chrysalises', 'minute' and 'phenomenal'. Staff continually talk to children as they play. Additionally, children's enjoyment of books is fostered extremely well.
- Staff provide an abundance of opportunities for children to master skills and be confident learners. High priority is given to the development of children's small-muscle movements as part of a sequenced curriculum towards excellent safety knowledge and life skills. Children enjoy peeling the bark from sticks, using their fingers in their creative work. They later move on to using a vegetable peeler for this task and eventually master the safe use of real tools in their woodland creations.
- Partnerships with parents are exemplary. Parents speak extremely highly of the pre-school and the rich experiences that their children receive. They say the nurturing staff go 'above and beyond' their expectations. Parents know what their children are learning and how they can support their rapid progress at home. Information is shared daily. This provides excellent and consistent continuity of care.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The manager and staff have excellent knowledge in relation to keeping children safe. This is apparent when they constantly risk assess the environment to ensure it is safe and suitable. In addition, they have secure knowledge of possible signs that may indicate a child is at risk of harm. Staff clearly understand procedures to report any concerns, the importance of open communication and working in close partnership with other professionals. The manager and leader ensure that recruitment and vetting arrangements are rigorous to help ensure that all staff are suitable for their roles. Staff complete paediatric and outdoor first-aid training to help to protect children's safety and welfare.

Setting details

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| Unique reference number | 2733968 |
| Local authority | Kent |
| Inspection number | 10293996 |
| Type of provision | Childcare on non-domestic premises |
| Registers | Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register |
| Day care type | Sessional day care |
| Age range of children at time of inspection | 2 to 4 |
| Total number of places | 18 |
| Number of children on roll | 22 |
| Name of registered person | Harlequin Out Of School Clubs Ltd |
| Registered person unique reference number | RP904177 |
| Telephone number | 01892 518065 |
| Date of previous inspection | Not applicable |

Information about this early years setting

Harlequin Forest Pre-School (TW) registered in 2023 and operates from a private woodland area in Tunbridge Wells. The setting employs eight members of staff, six of whom are qualified to level 3, including the leader, who holds a relevant forest school qualification. The setting is in receipt of funding for children aged three and four.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Kimberley Luckham

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 led the inspector on a learning walk and talked to the inspector about their curriculum and what they want their children to learn.
- Staff spoke with the inspector at appropriate times during the inspection, and the inspector took account of their views.
- The inspector spoke with the nominated individual about the leadership and management of the setting.
- The inspector observed the quality of education being provided and assessed the impact that this was having on children's learning.
- The manager and inspector carried out a joint observation of a group activity and evaluated the impact on the children's learning.

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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