

Inspection of Milstead Pre-School

Milstead Village Hall, Rawling Street, Milstead, Sittingbourne, Kent ME9 0RX

Inspection date: 22 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	Good
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What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Staff provide children with a nurturing environment, where they feel safe and secure. The children are excited to come into pre-school and quickly settle into their play. For example, they are keen to explore the role-play area. The children use stethoscopes as they look after the dolls. Staff provide the children with a wide range of activities to help them learn about caring for others and the importance of a healthy lifestyle.

Children develop their independence. For instance, they help to tidy up after mealtimes and put on high-visibility vests ready to go outside to play. Staff support children with sharing and taking turns. For example, they have put in place a timer to help support children with turn taking when using the sensory tent. Children follow instructions and remind friends that it is their turn when the timer goes off. Children's behaviour is good and appropriate to their stage of development.

Storytelling has a clear focus at the pre-school. Children enjoy reading and looking at books independently, as well as having a story read to them. They particularly enjoy acting out stories such as 'The Three Little Pigs'. They know the sequencing of the story and talk about what will happen next. The children recite together the words of the wolf as he huffs and puffs.

Staff encourage children to make informed choices in their play. For instance, the children choose which musical instrument they would like to play and take turns to decide which nursery rhyme they are going to sing next. The children particularly enjoy being scarecrows as they join in with the action songs.

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

- Staff use children's interests and next steps to develop the curriculum. This helps children to make progress across all areas of learning and development. Staff introduce science experiments to explore cause and effect with the children. For instance, children place items in a test tube and pour water in to see if they float or sink. Staff use new words with the children, such as pipet and test tube. They expand children's vocabulary and help them to develop their communication and language skills.
- Outside play is an important part of the day at the pre-school. Staff make effective use of the surrounding spaces to provide children with a range of physical play experiences. For instance, children enjoy running around, investigating the cricket ground and going for walks in the fields to visit the cows. Staff talk to the children about how to care for the world around them as they explore. For instance, children study the texture of the bark on the trees. They feel the bumpy surface and look for insects living in the bark.

- Parents speak highly of the pre-school and the support they receive from staff. Staff share information on progress and daily activities to support home learning. They have strong links with other settings children attend. This helps to provide continuity of care and learning between settings. The manager works closely with teachers at local schools, which helps to support children's move to school.
- The children enjoy playing with the trucks and diggers in the sand. Staff talk to them about what they are doing as they move the sand around, which supports the development of their fine motor skills. The younger children are eager to join in with group activities, and they follow the older children as they hunt for treasure. However, staff do not always adapt some activities to fully support the youngest children to join in. As a result, they are not always as actively involved as their older peers.
- Staff have clear intentions for children's learning. They provide a good range of adult-led activities. For instance, children enjoy making treasure maps using teabags and paints. They use the maps to hunt for the buried treasure. The older children quickly find the treasure hidden behind the trees marked with crosses. However, some of the focused activities staff provide do not challenge the thinking skills of the most able children to help them further develop their knowledge.
- Staff have high expectations for children's learning. They make strong use of sign language to support inclusivity within the setting. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) works closely with parents and other professionals to help support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, ensuring they reach their full potential.
- The manager recognises the importance of having a well-qualified staff team. She focuses on staff well-being and carries out regular supervisions to help support them in their role. For instance, she is in the process of assisting a member of staff to undertake SENCo training. Staff attend regular meetings and complete training to help them develop their already good practice.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The manager has a secure understanding of child protection procedures. She is aware of the actions to take if she has concerns in relation to children in the pre-school. The manager and deputy manager have completed designated safeguarding lead training. Staff complete a range of online safeguarding courses. This helps to ensure they are alert to extreme behaviours and views, such as radicalisation. The manager has robust recruitment procedures in place to make sure all staff working with children are suitable to do so. Staff are highly effective at helping children learn how to keep themselves and others safe. For example, staff teach children how to cross the road safely.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- review how some activities are organised, ensuring that younger children are fully included
- build on opportunities to challenge the thinking skills of the most able children to extend their learning even further.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY305618
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10289573
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	2 to 4
Total number of places	20
Number of children on roll	22
Name of registered person	Milstead Pre-School Partnership
Registered person unique reference number	RP909382
Telephone number	07464600972
Date of previous inspection	29 November 2017

Information about this early years setting

Milstead Pre-School registered in 2005. It operates from a village hall in Milstead, near Sittingbourne, Kent. The pre-school is open Monday to Friday, from 9am to 3pm, during term time only. The pre-school provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. There are five members of staff, of whom four hold a relevant early years qualification at level 3.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Sara Garrity

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 inspector observed the quality of education and carried out a joint observation with the deputy manager.
- The manager and inspector completed a learning walk together to discuss activities and intentions for children's learning.
- Parents' views were considered through discussions with the inspector on the day and through written documentation.
- The inspector sampled some documentation, including evidence of staff qualifications.

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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