

Inspection of Tops Gillingham

Tops Nursery, Middlefield House, Marlott Road, Gillingham SP8 4FA

Inspection date: 3 July 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

Warm and friendly staff greet children and parents as they arrive. Children quickly settle and are eager to explore the thoughtfully planned activities staff provide. Children form strong relationships with staff and demonstrate they feel safe and secure in their environment. For example, babies giggle and smile as they eat morning snack together.

Staff are attentive to children's needs. They show great care and respect to all children. Children know and follow the rules and boundaries and respond positively to staff. For instance, children help wipe the tables and prepare the room for snack and lunch. Children are thoughtful and caring towards their friends. Older children independently use sand timers to share resources. Younger children put blankets over each other as they pretend to sleep in tents in the role-play area.

Children benefit from the ambitious curriculum the manager has designed. Staff skilfully engage and interact with children to support their speech, language and communication. They consistently praise children. This helps children become independent and confident learners. All children make good progress in their learning and development. They develop a strong foundation in the knowledge, skills and understanding of the world they need for future learning.

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

- Staff successfully implement a balanced curriculum based on what children can already do and know. Staff know children well and use assessment effectively to plan challenging and motivating learning opportunities across all areas of learning. For example, older children excitedly carry clipboards, pens and paper and place ticks next to photos of bugs they collect in the garden. This helps to promote their early literacy skills.
- Staff have high expectations for all children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language. The special educational needs coordinator is dedicated and knowledgeable. She works closely with staff, outside agencies and families to support children's individual needs. This ensures all children make timely progress.
- Children have excellent knowledge of how to keep themselves healthy. For example, older children talk about which foods are good for them and what sugar does to their teeth. Staff teach children about oral hygiene and support children to brush their teeth every day. Staff encourage children to be active throughout the day and help them understand the effect of exercise on their bodies.
- Staff plan challenging and meaningful activities and give children regular

opportunities to try different experiences, rehearse new skills and embed their knowledge across the curriculum. However, staff do not always provide enough opportunities for older children to learn in quieter environments to support the development of their listening and attention skills.

- Children are very independent. They pour themselves drinks of water from water stations and use mirrors and tissues to wipe their noses. Staff work closely with parents to support children to become toilet trained. They provide motivating toys and books for parents to help their children with this process at home.
- Parents speak very positively about the range of activities staff provide and the good progress their children make. They comment on staff being friendly and approachable. Parents appreciate the advice, guidance and resources staff provide to help them support children's learning at home. Staff have good relationships with local schools and work closely with them and parents to ensure children have a successful transition to school.
- Children have effective communication skills. They express themselves clearly and confidently. Staff ask appropriate questions, comment on children's play and model new words to help build and extend children's vocabulary. However, staff miss opportunities to fully enhance younger children's speech and language development during song times.
- Staff are passionate and committed to listening to children and giving all children 'a voice'. They consistently encourage children to make choices and share their views. Children participate in the school council, where they help choose new toys and equipment.
- The manager is supportive of her staff team and has a secure understanding of her role and responsibilities. She provides access to online training for all staff to ensure they keep their knowledge and practice up to date. This helps to ensure children receive high-quality care and education.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff have a secure understanding of the signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect. They know what to do if they have a concern about a child's welfare. Staff have regular training in all aspects of safeguarding children and the manager uses team meetings to support staff to embed their knowledge of how to keep children safe. The environment for children is safe and secure. Staff teach children how to manage risks very effectively. For example, children learn how to use real woodwork tools and safety goggles. The manager has effective recruitment procedures in place. This helps to ensure that all adults working with children are suitable to do so.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- provide more opportunities for older children to learn in quieter environments to support the development of their listening and attention skills
- strengthen song time for younger children to fully enhance their speech and language development.

Setting details

Unique reference number	2649112
Local authority	Dorset
Inspection number	10298820
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 7
Total number of places	92
Number of children on roll	120
Name of registered person	Tops Day Nursery Limited
Registered person unique reference number	RP901328
Telephone number	01747 835533
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

Tops Gillingham is situated in the town of Gillingham, Dorset. It is open all year round. Sessions are available from 7am to 6pm Monday to Friday. The nursery employs 18 members of staff. The manager and eight other staff hold level 3 qualifications. One member of staff holds a level 5 qualification, one a level 2, and seven are unqualified. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Mikaela Jauncey

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 inspector viewed the provision and discussed the safety and suitability of the premises with the manager.
- The manager joined the inspector on a learning walk and talked to the inspector about their curriculum and what they want children to learn.
- The inspector talked to staff at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their views.
- Parents spoke to the inspector and the inspector took these views into consideration.
- The inspector observed the quality of education provided, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact that this was having on children's learning.
- The manager and the inspector carried out a joint observation of an activity designed to teach children how to calm themselves.
- The inspector looked at relevant documentation and reviewed evidence of how staff plan activities for children.

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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