

Inspection of Mega Camps Chelmsford

Hylands School, Chelmsford Road, Writtle, Chelmsford CM1 3ET

Inspection date: 26 July 2023

The quality and standards of early years provision

This inspection

Met

Previous inspection

Not applicable

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

This provision meets requirements

Children settle really well when they arrive. They are welcomed by warm and approachable staff. Staff notice if children are on their own and quickly sit to talk with them. Other children then join in and staff expertly step away to allow children to develop positive friendships with others. This develops children's confidence and social skills. During circle time, they discuss the camp rules, such as 'kind hands, kind feet and kind words' and 'stranger danger', helping children understand the behaviour expectations and how to keep themselves safe.

Children enjoy participating in an activity where they get to learn about a range of animals, including skunks, tortoises and cockroaches. They learn facts such as where they live, what they eat and their life expectancy. Children have the opportunity to touch the animals and ask questions. They discuss how they feel 'smooth and rough'. Staff promote children's thinking skills through introducing facts. For example, they talk about features of octopuses, such as how many brains and hearts they have.

Children build on their mathematical skills as they use play dough to make food for their shop, they discuss how much each item is. Staff question what they have made and begin to teach about healthy food choices to develop their physical and personal development. For example, when children say, 'It's lettuce', they discuss the food they enjoy eating and the vegetables they like, such as Brussels sprouts.

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

- Staff provide activities to celebrate different cultures. For example, they have previously learned about Chinese New Year. They challenge stereotypes and provide resources that are inclusive. For example, their small-world resources are wooden figures with no gender, enabling children to develop their imagination and create their own narrative.
- Children have access to lots of different areas in the school, including sports halls and art rooms, where they can participate in games and arts and crafts. For example, they have used the drama room for performing arts, where they enjoyed a visit from a magician. However, staff do not consistently note children's emerging interests. For example, when children are dressing up as superheroes and wanting to run around, staff do not always follow these interests, so that children can continue their play.
- Staff work with the local authority to provide spaces for children in receipt of additional funding. The managers explain the importance of inclusivity in their setting, to allow children from different backgrounds to access good quality care during the school holidays that complements their learning experiences.

- Staff provide support and access to care for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. They meet with families to discuss children's individual needs and review how they can provide equal access to all children. For example, they have previously welcomed in children's one-to-one support workers, so that children to receive familiar support while they attend the setting.
- Parents comment that staff are very professional, helpful and welcoming. They say their children have grown in confidence since starting and that children arrive happy and excited for their day. Younger children say they enjoy playing with the bricks and are excited to see the animals. Older children say they enjoy playing games and their favourite is dodgeball and laser tag.
- There are strong recruitment procedures in place to ensure staff are suitable and well equipped for the role. Staff have regular meetings with management, including supervision meetings, where they discuss training and areas in need of support. They speak highly of the management team and how their well-being is supported. Staff feel their voices are heard by managers as they share feedback on activities and routines of the day and positive changes are then made in the company.
- The strong management team are highly reflective and work to enhance activity programmes for the children. They regularly speak to parents, children and staff for feedback on what works well within the setting and if they have any suggestions to make improvements. The team receive positive feedback and will take into account others' views to make positive changes. For example, they recently changed an activity from archery to laser tag, which has had a positive response from staff, children and their parents.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff have good knowledge of how to keep children safe. They attend regular training and their knowledge is regularly tested by management to ensure they know the signs and symptoms of abuse and how to report any concerns. Staff are aware of safeguarding concerns such as female genital mutilation, radicalisation and county lines. They know the signs and symptoms of these and how to report concerns. Staff are also aware of the reporting procedure if they had concerns about another member of staff or the management team. Staff teach children to be safe as they practise fire drills, reminding them to stay with 'staff in purple'. Staff complete regular head counts, particularly when they move around the setting.

Setting details

Unique reference number	2642343
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10295748
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Day care type	Out-of-school day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	4 to 14
Total number of places	120
Number of children on roll	101
Name of registered person	Mega Camps Ltd
Registered person unique reference number	RP534735
Telephone number	07876343914
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

Mega Camps Chelmsford registered in 2021. It is run by Mega Camps Ltd. The camp employs 16 members of childcare staff. The camp opens Monday to Friday from 8am until 6pm during school holidays.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Stef Montgomery

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 showed the inspector around the club and explained how the play environment is organised.
- Children spoke to the inspector about what they are doing at the setting.
- The inspector took into account parents' views.
- The inspector looked at relevant documentation, including suitability records and first-aid certificates of staff members.

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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