

Inspection of Fir Cones Day Nursery

Firs School, 45 Newton Lane, Chester CH2 2HJ

Inspection date: 9 October 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

Children are happy and settled at this calm nursery. Staff notice when children need reassurance or just a cuddle. They support children's play gently and skilfully. Babies receive the very best of care from the expert staff. For example, staff respond quickly to babies as they awake from their sleep or when they need feeding. This means that the care needs of babies are met well.

Children are keen to learn at the nursery. They know exactly what they are going to play with as they arrive in nursery. This is because staff take notice of children's interests and arrange well-thought-out learning opportunities. This encourages children's thinking and curiosity. For example, children delight in acting out some of the story 'Rosie's Walk' that staff read to them. They learn important new knowledge, such as what the words 'over' and 'under' mean.

Children behave sensibly. This is because staff gently remind children of how to behave. Staff are expert role models, for instance demonstrating the use of manners and how to tidy up the resources. Children respond happily to the soft sound of the nursery's tidy-up tambourine. They understand the importance of knowing where resources belong.

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

- The manager has established clear aims for the nursery's curriculum. For example, she makes sure that children learn how to make friends, be physically strong and become confident talkers. However, she has not identified some of the smaller building blocks of knowledge that children need to learn. On occasion, this leads to some staff providing activities without a thorough understanding of what children will learn. At these times, children do not build on their previous learning.
- The nursery is full of happy chatter between the staff and children. Staff talk and read books often with children. They comment thoughtfully on children's play and provide them with important words to support their growing vocabulary. Additionally, some staff use sign language to complement children's early speech. Children develop a good grasp of communication and language, which helps them to learn successfully.
- Staff sing many nursery rhymes and action songs with children. Children adore delving into the bag of song puppets and musical instruments that staff provide. They dance and rock rhythmically to the beat of the songs that staff sing. Children learn to move in response to musical rhythms.
- Staff listen carefully to what children say and help them to listen to others. For instance, staff show that they are listening by positioning themselves at children's height and waiting quietly while children speak. Children learn how to

develop their own listening and attention in readiness to learn.

- Children learn from the staff that being healthy is important. Staff provide nutritious meals and snacks for children throughout the day. They talk with the children to help them understand the names, flavours and textures of the range of fruits and vegetables provided. Children welcome learning about and trying new foods.
- In the main, staff know when to step back and encourage children to act responsibly. This means that children are increasingly confident to have a try at new or less familiar activities. However, sometimes staff carry out tasks that children are capable of doing themselves, such as giving out cups. This reduces the opportunities for children to further develop their independence.
- The manager provides staff with regular guidance and coaching to improve their work with the children. Additionally, she makes good use of the curriculum leaders at the linked primary school, such as for music, to provide staff with further training about the areas of learning. This thoughtful support enhances the knowledge and expertise of the nursery staff, helping them to be able and skilled in their roles.
- The manager helps parents to feel that they are a valued and important part of the nursery's work. Parents said that they feel their children are safe when they leave them with the staff. They value the regular information that staff provide that helps them to support their children's learning at home.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The manager makes sure that staff attend safeguarding training regularly. They complete annual refresher training together with staff at the linked primary school. This ensures that information sharing between the nursery and school is well organised and effective. Staff understand their responsibility to report immediately any concerns that they have about a child. The staff working with babies are trained in the additional needs of young children, such as how to safely place babies to sleep. Staff are vigilant about safety. For instance they check on sleeping children regularly. The manager and staff make sure that the premises are safe and secure for children to play and learn.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- strengthen further staff's knowledge of how to develop children's independence so that children become even more capable
- support all staff to identify more clearly the building blocks of knowledge that children will learn and why.

Setting details

Unique reference number	2699380
Local authority	Cheshire West and Chester
Inspection number	10310743
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	0 to 4
Total number of places	35
Number of children on roll	34
Name of registered person	Firs Education Limited
Registered person unique reference number	2699381
Telephone number	01244 322443
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

Fir Cones Day Nursery registered in 2022. The nursery is based in The Firs School, Chester and is independently run. There are currently five staff working directly with children, all of whom have appropriate early years qualifications. The nursery is open from Monday to Friday, 7.45am to 6pm, all year round. The nursery receives funding for the provision of free early education for three-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Andrea Vaughan

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 manager and the inspector completed a learning walk together.
- A joint observation was carried out by the inspector and the manager.
- The inspector held discussions with staff, children and parents at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The inspector looked at a sample of the nursery's documents, including about staff suitability and training.

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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