

# Inspection of Top of the Hill Pre-School

64 Windward Road, Rochester ME1 2NB

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Inspection date: 13 December 2023

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
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The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
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Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
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Personal development	<b>Good</b>
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Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
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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 at the pre-school are warm and welcoming. Children are excited when they arrive in the morning and quickly settle to a group session, where staff set out clear expectations for the day. The staff and manager's shared vision is to give all children a good start in life. They support them to build the skills they need to become independent, confident and curious learners. Staff build good relationships with children and provide clear and consistent boundaries. Children thrive in this environment and show they feel safe and secure. They are confident to explore the resources and the space independently. They know they can rely on staff to provide comfort and help when they need it.

Staff carefully consider children's interests when planning activities. They ask parents for ideas about activities that will most excite their child. Staff know each child's next steps in learning well and plan activities that focus on their developmental stages. For example, older children enjoy learning words to describe how different objects feel. Younger children learn colours and shape names as they complete puzzles. Staff provide both small and large group activities to support children to learn many skills, including focussing, listening and engaging. These fundamental skills will support children when they move onto school.

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

- Staff use regular assessment to ensure they provide well targeted activities to fill the gaps in children's learning. Most staff are confident to build on children's skills as they play alongside them. For example, during imaginative play staff encourage children to think about different scenarios to extend their thinking and ideas. However, some staff are less confident at knowing how to effectively extend children's learning.
- Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported. The manager and staff work well with parents and professionals to provide a continuity of care. Staff create small, achievable targets and provide successful nurture groups to address specific areas of need. Staff work skilfully and sensitively alongside children. They provide many calming activities for children, such as finger painting, using mirrors and singing.
- Generally children behave with kindness and care for each other. Staff nurture and encourage friendships to blossom. Children thoroughly enjoy working as a team to use blocks to make a car. When arguments happen, staff are quick to step in. They use gentle words to support children to understand how their behaviour might make other children feel.
- Staff are engaging in their interactions with children. They use excited voices and words to help children want to be involved and take part. Consequently, children can focus for long periods of time. Children have fun and giggle as they

play turn taking games, asking for more. At times, some children are wandering and disengaged from meaningful play. Staff are not quick enough to support these children to positively engage in an activity.

- Staff have embedded an effective key person system to promote children's well-being. They ensure they spend time with their key children and build a positive and trusting relationship from the start. Children show they are keen to play with staff. They regularly take a staff member to find a book and cuddle up in their lap to listen. Children eagerly wait for staff to say 'ready, steady, go' before they race toy cars down slopes.
- Staff promote a healthy lifestyle. They encourage children to take part in physical activities, such as forest school. They recently supported families to take part in the 'Medway Mile'. The manager provides 'stay and play' sessions for parents focussed on healthy eating. Children are keen to talk about the healthy fruit they enjoy and what they have in their lunch boxes.
- The manager is supportive of her staff. She encourages them to make progress in their personal development to enhance the learning opportunities for children. The manager provides regular supervisions and completes observations of her staff. However, this is not yet fully effective in identifying and supporting gaps in staff knowledge, so they can all provide the best quality teaching.
- Parents comment that 'staff go above and beyond to build up relationships with all the parents'. The manager communicates regularly with parents and provides many opportunities throughout the year for them to come in and spend time with their child in the pre-school. Parents report that staff take account of what they say and implement it in the setting to support their children.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a culture of safeguarding throughout the pre-school that places priority on children's safety and well-being. The manager and staff are secure in their knowledge and understanding of the signs that may suggest a child is at risk. Staff are clear about the procedures to follow should they have concerns about a child's welfare or the conduct of another staff member. The manager follows robust recruitment procedures. She conducts regular supervisions and ongoing suitability checks of staff.

## What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- strengthen the monitoring of staff to ensure good quality teaching is maintained across the provision
- support less confident staff to improve their interactions with children, to ensure children are meaningfully engaged in learning that promotes their development.

## Setting details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	EY476475
<b>Local authority</b>	Medway
<b>Inspection number</b>	10305448
<b>Type of provision</b>	Childcare on non-domestic premises
<b>Registers</b>	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
<b>Day care type</b>	Sessional day care
<b>Age range of children at time of inspection</b>	2 to 4
<b>Total number of places</b>	34
<b>Number of children on roll</b>	54
<b>Name of registered person</b>	Kane, Lisa Helen
<b>Registered person unique reference number</b>	RP515835
<b>Telephone number</b>	01634 407110
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	21 February 2018

## Information about this early years setting

Top of the Hill Pre-School registered in 2014. It is privately owned and operates from a hall in Rochester, Kent. The pre-school is open five days a week, from 8am to 4pm, during school term times only. A lunch club operates from 11.30am to 12.30pm. The pre-school receives funding to provide free early education for children aged two, three and four years. There are eight members of staff, seven of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications.

## Information about this inspection

**Inspector**  
Nina Harvey

## 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 pre-school.
- The manager joined the inspector on a learning walk and talked to the inspector about their curriculum and what they want the children to learn.
- The inspector observed the quality of education being provided, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact that this was having on children's learning.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation with the manager.
- The inspector talked to staff at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their views.
- Parents shared their views about the setting with the inspector.

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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