

Inspection of Chives Montessori School

Akenham Studios, Akenham, Ipswich, Suffolk IP6 0HL

Inspection date: 8 December 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	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Staff are warm and nurturing. This helps children and babies to form strong attachments and settle easily. Staff know the children well. They focus on the individual needs of the children and their families. This has a positive impact on children's personal, social and emotional development. Behaviour is very positive across the nursery school. Staff provide gentle reminders to children about using appropriate manners and are good role models themselves. Older children are polite in their interactions with visitors. Staff encourage children to celebrate their individual achievements with each other. This helps to boost their strong emotional well-being.

Staff implement a curriculum that supports children to become confident, independent and motivated learners. The learning environment is carefully planned to provide children with practical opportunities to experiment with resources for themselves. While exploring cups of rice, younger children decide to use a spoon to transfer the contents from one cup to another. Staff encourage children to use careful and precise movements to complete this task successfully. Supporting children's awareness of sustainability and caring for the planet are central in the curriculum. Staff involve children in activities including composting leftover fruit, remembering to turn off the tap and growing their own vegetables. This supports children's awareness of how they can reuse natural resources and reduce waste.

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

- Since the last inspection, the provider has established a more accurate overview of the nursery school. They have taken positive action to drive further improvement of the provision and secure good outcomes for children. The provider leads regular supervision meetings with staff and works with them to develop their professional practice. Staff say that they feel valued and have a clearer understanding of what they want children to learn.
- Staff review children's progress regularly. This helps them understand when children are ready for the next stage in their learning. Children of all ages come together daily for mealtimes, and they have regular opportunities to spend time in the other rooms. Parents are also involved in discussions about their children's readiness to move into the next room. As a result, babies and children experience a very smooth transition and settle with ease when the time comes.
- Staff foster children's confidence and nurture their sense of autonomy. Children are encouraged to take care of their own belongings, such as organising their coats and bags on their own pegs. Staff are calm and supportive when children practise new skills, such as pouring drinks or carrying a tray to the kitchen. This helps children to build resilience when things go wrong. For example, they know where to find a brush or a cloth to clean up spillages and do this with little need

for support.

- Overall, staff support children's communication and language skills effectively. For example, they emphasise new words in stories and encourage children to revisit these in their play. Strong focus is placed on the importance of singing for the youngest children, to help widen babies and toddlers' vocabulary. However, occasionally, staff do not focus their interactions to encourage children to ask more questions, clarify their ideas and extend their critical thinking.
- Children are encouraged to explore and refine their movements through activities such as yoga, obstacle courses and balancing to walk across the wooden planks. Older children enjoy exploring the outdoor grassed area for more energetic team games. These activities help children become more physically competent and support their good health.
- Staff provide young children with frequent sensory opportunities. Babies babble and make sounds as they investigate experiences such as water play, catching bubbles and being creative with paint and glue. Staff join in enthusiastically with this play, helping babies to feel confident when they are trying these activities for the first time.
- Parents speak highly of the nursery school. They appreciate that their children are cared for by a consistent team of staff that knows their children's needs well. Staff share information about the planned learning activities for the week ahead, which helps parents feel informed about their children's education. There are regular opportunities for children to borrow books and equipment to share with their parents at home. This helps to extend children's learning experiences, including their interest in early reading.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Since the last inspection, all staff have updated their training in child protection. In addition, the provider leads routine discussions with staff about a range of wider safeguarding themes. This helps staff to maintain a good understanding of the signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect. Staff know what action to take if they become concerned about a child in their care, including the agencies they must share this information with. Thorough checks are completed, both at the point of recruitment and during ongoing supervision meetings with staff. Staff are also vigilant to ensure children are collected by people who are authorised by their parents. This goes further to protect children's welfare.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- support staff to consistently build on opportunities for children to widen their ideas and extend their critical thinking skills.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY290559
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	10271641
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 4
Total number of places	45
Number of children on roll	66
Name of registered person	McNeill, Carolyn Olive Juliet
Registered person unique reference number	RP512589
Telephone number	01473 212448 and 07771 892101
Date of previous inspection	15 December 2022

Information about this early years setting

Chives Montessori School registered in 1989. The setting employs nine members of staff, six of whom hold qualifications at level 2 and above. One member of staff holds qualified teacher status. The nursery school opens Monday to Friday, all year round, from 8am until 5.30pm. Funded early education is provided for two-, three- and four-year-old children. The nursery school follows the Montessori approach.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Sarah Clements

Inspection activities

- The inspector discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the provider and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the provider.
- The provider and nursery school manager joined the inspector on a learning walk and talked to the inspector about their curriculum and what they want their children to learn.
- The inspector observed the quality of interactions during activities, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact this has on children's learning.
- The provider and inspector jointly observed and evaluated an activity.
- The inspector talked to staff at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their views.
- Children told the inspector about their friends and what they like to do when they are at the nursery school.
- Parents and grandparents shared their views of the nursery school with the inspector.
- The inspector spoke with the provider about the leadership and management of the setting.
- The inspector looked at relevant documentation and reviewed evidence of the suitability of staff working in the nursery school.

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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