

Inspection of Castle Hill Pre-School

Fort Hill School, Kenilworth Road, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG23 8JQ

Inspection date:

6 December 2023

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Good

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision requires improvement

Although children enjoy their play and activities, staff's organisation sometimes means that the quality of teaching is variable and children's play and learning are not purposeful enough. For example, at times, staff do not do enough to help children to build on their knowledge and skills. Despite this, staff have a secure understanding of children's individual learning needs and identify gaps in their development. They have a suitable knowledge of how activities support children's learning. There are times when staff provide some good-quality interactions, including talking with children individually. This helps to close some gaps in children's learning and supports them to make appropriate progress.

Children are happy and settled at the pre-school and they have fun. For example, when they spend some time outside, they enjoy playing imaginatively in the mud kitchen. They develop skills, including strength and coordination, as they tip and pour water into different types of containers and stir muddy water, using large utensils. Children have positive relationships with the warm, caring staff and develop friendships with each other. They enjoy the activities led by staff and generally engage well with these. Children show they are proud of their achievements, such as when they use pens to decorate masks. Some children show they are beginning to understand responsibilities, such as helping to clean the table and put rubbish in the bin.

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

- Staff feel supported in their work and well-being. They have good opportunities for training and professional development, including attaining recognised qualifications. However, the monitoring and oversight of the quality of the provision and staff's practice are not fully effective to help identify areas to develop and improve. There has not been enough focus on how well the curriculum is implemented or the quality of teaching. Consequently, this does not ensure that children's learning experiences are consistently good.
- The provider has not understood their responsibility to notify Ofsted of significant events as required. For example, there have been some issues relating to the premises, which have now been resolved. Ofsted does not intend to take any action.
- The new management team has identified areas where children need support due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. They have introduced activities such as loose-parts play to help encourage children's engagement. However, staff deployment does not always provide children with consistent support. At times, some children become boisterous and lack engagement in purposeful play. Staff do not fully consider how they organise the use of the indoor and outdoor environments. As a result, they do not always make the most of these

areas to support children's engagement in learning.

- At times, staff provide good-quality interactions and teaching. They know which children need extra support, such as in their language development. They spend some time talking to these children and promote their involvement in singing songs and rhymes. Staff understand the importance of acting to close any gaps in children's development. They put in place individual education plans and make referrals to outside professionals when appropriate. They use additional funding to support the needs of individual children and their families.
- Children arrive with enthusiasm to start their day. They understand the daily routine and follow simple instructions, such as to wash their hands before eating or brush their teeth. This helps children to learn about caring for themselves. Children acquire some skills for their future learning, including being kind to others. They are beginning to develop some independence, such as helping to prepare their snacks. However, sometimes, staff step in too quickly to assist children. As a result, children's developing skills are not always built on effectively.
- Children are confident to take risks. For example, they walk down the slide unaided. However, they do not demonstrate that they fully understand how to keep themselves and others safe. Staff intervene at appropriate times but do not fully extend children's understanding of how to manage these risks safely. For instance, they tell children about using the slide one at a time with little explanation or exploration about how to stay safe.
- There are strong parent partnerships. Staff know the families very well. They understand their needs and provide caring support to them. Parents speak very positively about the pre-school and staff. They comment about the caring staff and how their children make progress, such as developing social and language skills.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff have a secure understanding of their child protection responsibilities. They know how to use information about thresholds to identify the significance of any signs or indicators of concern. Staff are familiar with referral processes, including reporting concerns to the pre-school designated safeguarding lead or to outside agencies. There is an appropriately robust recruitment process to check the suitability of new staff. In addition, there are regular reviews of staff's ongoing suitability. Staff show appropriate awareness of promoting children's safety at the premises. The premises are kept secure and there is closed-circuit television in place to monitor the surroundings.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

To meet the requirements of the early years foundation stage, the provider must:

	Due date
implement effective monitoring of the curriculum and use the information known about children's learning needs to develop staff's teaching to a consistently good level.	08/03/2024

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

- develop the organisation of the curriculum to engage children in consistently good learning experiences indoors and outdoors
- extend opportunities for children to use their developing independence skills to help them manage tasks for themselves
- build on children's awareness of taking risks and how to keep themselves and others safe.

Setting details

Unique reference number	110024
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	10305490
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	2 to 4
Total number of places	30
Number of children on roll	13
Name of registered person	Castle Hill Pre-School Committee
Registered person unique reference number	RP909894
Telephone number	01256 355 719
Date of previous inspection	23 February 2018

Information about this early years setting

Castle Hill Pre-School registered in 1990 and is based in Winklebury, Basingstoke, Hampshire. It is open from Monday to Friday, term time only. Sessions are from 9am to 3pm. The pre-school employs five members of childcare staff, including the manager. Of these, four hold relevant early years qualifications at level 3. The pre-school provides funded early years education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Sheena Bankier

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the pre-school 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 explained the intentions for children's learning, including the aims and rationale for the curriculum.
- The inspector viewed the provision and discussed the safety and suitability of the premises.
- The inspector observed the quality of education being provided, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact on children's learning.
- Children chatted and interacted with the inspector during the inspection.
- Discussions and meetings were held with the managers and staff during the inspection.
- Some parents discussed their views and provided feedback about the pre-school to the inspector.
- The manager and the inspector observed and evaluated an activity together.

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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