

Inspection of Kestrel Under Fives Playgroup

St Davids Church, Newton Close, Lordswood, Chatham, Kent ME5 8TR

Inspection date: 8 February 2024

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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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 welcome children and families into their inclusive setting. Children arrive happy and demonstrate they feel safe and secure. They develop close attachments to their key person and familiar staff. The manager and staff are very good role models, who treat children with kindness and respect. Children learn to be kind and considerate. They form friendships with each other and play well together. Children develop good levels of confidence, independence and self-esteem. Staff encourage them to develop their self-care skills. For example, children learn to pour drinks and serve their snack. They also wipe their nose and dispose of the tissue in the bin.

The manager and staff identify areas for development impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. They strongly focus on providing opportunities for children to develop their personal and social development and their speech and language skills. Staff build on what they know about children. They provide a variety of experiences that engage and excite children to learn. For example, staff inspire children to explore textures and colours during sensory play. Furthermore, they ask children to think of words that describe the texture. This helps to promote children's developing vocabulary and communication skills.

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

- The manager and staff have developed a curriculum that prepares children for the next stage in their development. Staff gather detailed information from parents and carers when children join the setting. This helps staff to know the children's interests and their previous learning experiences. Staff carefully use this information to provide opportunities to enable children to build on their existing skills.
- The manager support staff's practice effectively. She carries out regular observations, supervision sessions and team meetings. Staff share ideas and have a positive attitude towards training to help improve the outcomes for children. Staff comment that they feel highly valued and supported in their role.
- Generally, staff manage children's behaviour well. Children show that they understand the routine and use good manners. They know to line up to go outside after putting on their coats. However, at times, staff do not consistently reinforce the setting rules to ensure that children fully understand what is expected of them. For example, not all staff help children to understand why they need to walk indoors.
- Staff provide extremely strong support for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Staff quickly identify those children who may need additional support and carefully consider how they can help children. Staff work closely with parents, and referrals to external professionals are made in a timely manner. This integrated approach helps all children to make good progress.

- Partnerships with parents are good. Parents express their appreciation for the support they receive. They say that staff are very caring and create a home-from-home environment for their children. Staff keep parents well informed about their children's development and share ideas to help support their children's learning at home.
- Staff skilfully model language, identify key words to be used during activities, ask questions and give children time to respond. This helps to support children's speech and language skills. Children develop a love of stories, songs and rhymes. They enjoy listening to stories being read. Staff ask questions and encourage children to talk about the story. This helps to build on children's critical thinking skills.
- Staff provide opportunities for children to learn about events in their own culture and the wider world. For example, they learn about Diwali, Christmas and Chinese New Year. During the inspection, children tasted Chinese food and attempted to use chopsticks. Furthermore, children benefit from local outings. They visit local shops and woodland areas to help them gain a deeper understanding of their local community and the natural world.
- Overall, staff interact with children well as they play and provide meaningful learning experiences. Children learn to take turns, share resources and help each other to make models with dough. They concentrate well and become deeply engrossed in their chosen task. However, at times, some routines and transitions disrupt children's play and their ability to fully engage in activities.
- Children benefit from exciting activities that help them to develop good physical skills. They use their small-muscle skills and hand-eye coordination to complete puzzles and use tools to make models with wooden construction materials. Furthermore, children have ample opportunities to practise and build on their large-muscle skills and coordination. They excitedly take part in physical activities, such as 'The Bean Game'. They use their bodies to stretch, bend, run and jump.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts children's interests first.

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 be consistent in promoting behaviour management strategies to help children to learn what behaviour is expected of them
- review and improve the organisation of daily routines to minimise the disruption to children's learning.

Setting details

Unique reference number	103816
Local authority	Medway
Inspection number	10317290
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	40
Number of children on roll	66
Name of registered person	Kestrel Under Fives Playgroup Committee
Registered person unique reference number	RP518201
Telephone number	01634 666716
Date of previous inspection	17 May 2018

Information about this early years setting

Kestrel Under Fives Playgroup opened in 1976. The playgroup is open from 9am to 3pm, Monday to Thursday, term time only. The playgroup receives funding for the provision of free early education for children aged two, three and four years. The provider employs 16 staff. Of these, 11 staff hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 or above. One member of staff holds qualified teacher status.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Nicky Chambers

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 manager and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the setting.
- The inspector viewed the setting and discussed the safety and suitability of the premises.
- The manager joined the inspector on a learning walk and talked to the inspector about their curriculum and what they want 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 manager and the inspector carried out two joint observations.
- The inspector spoke to staff, children and parents at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The inspector looked at relevant documentation, including evidence of the suitability of staff working at the setting.

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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