

Inspection of Potton Woodentops

The Hollow, Biggleswade Road, Potton, Beds SG19 2LU

Inspection date: 26 February 2024

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 create a vibrant, friendly and inviting indoor and outdoor environment for children. Children arrive confidently, settle quickly and know where to place their personal belongings when they arrive, such as their coats, water bottle, packed lunches and book bag. This promotes a 'ready to learn' attitude from the moment they arrive at pre-school.

Staff have designed a clear curriculum that is based on the knowledge and skills they want children to acquire before they leave pre-school to go to school. Activities reflect children's current interests. For example, children put on hard hats and high visibility jackets and use cardboard boxes to 'mend a hole in a pipe', which has caused the 'road to flood'. They enlist the help of friends, explaining what the problem is. Children give detailed and creative explanations to staff when they are asked how it is going to be fixed.

Staff have clear expectations of children's behaviour and communicate these effectively and positively to them. Children understand the pre-school rules and the reason each is important. Staff use consistent strategies to remind children of what is expected and why actions such as standing on seating are not safe.

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

- Since the last inspection, the provider and the staff have worked hard with the support of the local authority to make improvements. This has had a positive impact on outcomes for children and improved children's safety.
- Staff have designed a curriculum to give children key skills and knowledge to provide a secure foundation for their future learning at school. For example, one way they encourage children to share and take turns is to provide a limited number of ride-on toys and sand timers. Children watch the timers and regulate turn-taking between themselves
- Staff know their key children well. They understand children's level of development, progress and next steps in learning, especially those children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) or who require additional support. The special educational needs coordinator provides effective support to staff so that children with SEND make good progress from their starting points.
- Children's communication and language development is a key focus. All children participate in specific language programmes, as well as sing-and-sign sessions. Children take home a book bag each day where they can share stories with parents to further promote the importance of early literacy.
- Staff's interactions with children are good overall. They interact at children's level as they extend their learning and vocabulary. For example, when a child says that a marble is 'super big', a member of staff introduces the word

'ginormous' as an alternative. Children show perseverance and a determination to succeed, even if it takes them several attempts. For example, staff encourage children to try a 'twist' or 'pull' action to see which works when putting lids back on pens.

- Staff know when to step back and let children lead their own learning. For example, children use planks, crates and tyres to create and adjust an obstacle course. They show resilience as they fall and get up, as one child states, 'I'm alright, I am four.' Children balance well and show good physical control of their bodies as they walk along a see-saw they have made from a plank and a crate.
- Partnerships with parents are successful and effective. Parents are very pleased with the provision for their children. They specifically comment on the progress their children have made in their communication and language development since starting.
- Staff are deployed effectively throughout each session so that children are well supervised and safe, for example, when using the outdoor area and bathroom. However, group times are not planned or organised in the most successful way to promote high levels of engagement for all children.
- Children understand the routines of the pre-school, for example, that the ringing of the bell indicates a group time or tidy-up time. However, this interrupts some children's chosen play that they are engrossed in. They are given no warning but expected to stop what they are doing and follow the next instruction. This does not help children to finish activities to their own satisfaction or make a smooth transition to the next part of their day.

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:

- improve the way that children are helped to make the transition to activities that are part of the daily pre-school routine so that they have time to finish self-chosen activities to their own satisfaction
- develop the way group times are organised and delivered so that they better promote high levels of engagement for all children.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY478548
Local authority	Central Bedfordshire
Inspection number	10286859
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register
Day care type	Sessional day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	2 to 4
Total number of places	32
Number of children on roll	43
Name of registered person	Noakes, Anne Jacqueline
Registered person unique reference number	RP905418
Telephone number	01767261100
Date of previous inspection	27 March 2023

Information about this early years setting

Potton Woodentops registered in 2014. The pre-school employs 11 members of childcare staff. Of these, eight hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 or above, including one member of staff with early years professional status. The pre-school opens from Monday to Thursday during term-time only. Sessions are from 8am to 4pm. The pre-school provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Anna Davies

Inspection activities

- The inspector discussed any continued impact of the COVID-19 pandemic with the provider and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the provider.
- The provider and the inspector completed a learning walk together and discussed how the curriculum is organised.
- The inspector observed the quality of teaching during activities indoors and outdoors and assessed the impact this has on children's learning.
- The inspector spoke with staff at appropriate times throughout the inspection.
- Children spoke to the inspector about the activities they were doing.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation with the provider.
- The inspector held a meeting with the provider. She looked at relevant documentation and reviewed evidence of the suitability of staff working in the nursery.
- A number of parents spoke to the inspector during the inspection, and the inspector took account of their views.

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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