

# Inspection of Castle Nurseries at Willow Avenue

Greenway, Fenham, Newcastle upon Tyne NE4 9TU

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Inspection date: 16 April 2024

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

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The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Outstanding

## **What is it like to attend this early years setting?**

### **The provision is good**

The manager and staff place children and their families at the heart of their practice. This is evident from the moment children arrive in the nursery. They excitedly look at pictures creatively displayed on the entrance hall walls, some of which show recent Eid celebrations with their families. The manager's highly enthusiastic and welcoming approach ensures that children feel secure and they enjoy the time they spend in nursery. She passionately says that 'our children need to feel safe and loved', which demonstrates total devotion to her role.

All children access an ambitious and well-thought-out curriculum that supports their learning well overall. Integration of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is of high priority, and children benefit from excellent support from the staff team, in partnership with external agencies. This becomes apparent when children in pre-school enjoy a 'play dough disco'. They squeeze and press their balls of soft dough in their hands and turn around as they skilfully roll the dough. Staff take an active part and provide support if they feel children require a little extra help.

Children behave exceptionally well for their age. Staff make their expectations clear, including at the beginning of group times, so children understand and respond to appropriate boundaries. Throughout the nursery, there is a continual buzz of excitement, showing that children thoroughly enjoy attending.

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

- The manager and her staff team implement a structured, progressive curriculum that meets children's needs well, overall. Great thought is given to children developing independence and confidence. For example, very young children choose what foods they would like to eat, and older children take pride in being lunchtime 'helpers'. Parent feedback for inspection shows they appreciate how well staff support their children.
- Children are supported exceptionally well when they first begin attending. Each child is allocated a key person who is there to support children as they begin to stay on their own in nursery. This is illustrated in the baby room when staff gently sing to children and provide cuddles to help them get used to their new surroundings. Children settle with this support and are happy to snuggle in and fall asleep.
- Support for children with SEND is exemplary. Children's needs are swiftly identified, in consultation with parents, and referrals are made for external help and support if this is required. Staff are highly skilled in supporting children. This is particularly evident when pre-school staff play alongside children with SEND, modelling words and using signing to encourage communication.

- Two-year-old children, including those who are in receipt of funding, show high levels of perseverance and keep on trying, even if they encounter difficulties. This is illustrated when the tower they are building falls down and they calmly build it up again. Staff are on hand to support and encourage children to build their tower so it is as big as the staff member. Children hand more bricks in anticipation and gasp when it all falls down.
- The staff team receives high levels of in-house support from the manager, who works alongside them in the nursery rooms. Excellent opportunities are provided for staff to observe good practice in other nurseries in the organisation. This supports staff's ongoing development and enhances children's achievements over time.
- Staff encourage children to attend to their own personal needs, such as wiping their own nose, when they are able. Children are keen to find the box of tissues, including when they are playing outdoors. However, staff do not consistently model good practice to show children how to wash their hands after this activity, to strengthen their understanding of ways to support their good health.
- Very young children in the baby room benefit from a variety of play spaces that support their learning very well, overall. A well-planned decked area allows children to freely move around and explore. However, occasionally, staff do not plan well enough in the larger outdoor play space for children to fully support their attention and concentration. Children tend to flit between mostly large physical play resources and do not engage in activities for longer periods of time, to strengthen their learning.

## **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:**

- help children to develop a deeper understanding of practices that support their good health
- sharpen the focus on learning when very young children play outdoors, to fully support their attention and concentration.

## Setting details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	EY224369
<b>Local authority</b>	Newcastle upon Tyne
<b>Inspection number</b>	10335434
<b>Type of provision</b>	Childcare on non-domestic premises
<b>Registers</b>	Early Years Register
<b>Day care type</b>	Full day care
<b>Age range of children at time of inspection</b>	0 to 4
<b>Total number of places</b>	90
<b>Number of children on roll</b>	83
<b>Name of registered person</b>	Newcastle City Council
<b>Registered person unique reference number</b>	RP910108
<b>Telephone number</b>	0191 2744563
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	15 June 2018

## Information about this early years setting

Castle Nurseries at Willow Avenue registered in 2002 and is located in Fenham, Newcastle upon Tyne. The nursery operates Monday to Friday, from 8am to 6pm, for 51 weeks of the year. The nursery employs 14 childcare staff. Of these, one holds a level 2 qualification, six have appropriate qualifications at level 3, two have qualifications at level 4 and four are qualified to level 6. There is also one apprentice. The nursery receives funding for the provision of free early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

## Information about this inspection

### Inspector

Nicola Jones

## 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 provider.
- The inspector viewed the nursery and discussed the safety and suitability of the premises.
- The manager and inspector completed a learning walk together of all areas of the nursery and discussed the early years curriculum.
- Children spoke to and communicated with the inspector during the inspection.
- The inspector talked to staff at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The inspector spoke with the manager about the leadership and management of the nursery.
- The special educational needs coordinator spoke to the inspector about how they support children with SEND.
- 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 of a group activity in the pre-school room with the manager.
- Parents shared their views of the nursery with the inspector.
- The manager showed the inspector documentation to demonstrate the suitability of staff.

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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