

Inspection of Hersden Under 5's Project

Hersden Under 5's Centre, Shaftesbury Road, Hersden, Canterbury, Kent CT3 4HS

Inspection date: 16 April 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

The dedicated manager and her staff provide a welcoming and safe place where every child can thrive. They create a friendly and calm atmosphere where children and families feel included and part of a community. Children happily wave goodbye to their parents as they independently walk into the pre-school. They are instantly welcomed by staff, who guide them into the room where many inviting activities are awaiting them.

Staff are good at supporting children to build positive friendships as they gently remind them of the rules. Children are keen to find their friends and enjoy playing games together. They smile and engage as they build brick houses for toy animals, role play in the pretend kitchen, and discover marine animals in the water tray. Staff listen carefully to children about what they enjoy playing and what they would like to learn. They use this information when planning, in order to provide activities that will interest children and ignite their curiosity. Staff are enthusiastic in their interactions with children, and draw them into play and learning.

All staff have a good understanding of the curriculum and what skills children need to learn. Staff skilfully provide activities that build on what children already know and can do. Small-group times are used very successfully to ensure that children of all abilities can access the learning that supports them to make good progress. Staff work hard to ensure that children leave the pre-school with the necessary skills to thrive in their future. Children show that they are confident, independent, able to listen and communicate well, and enjoy learning.

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

- Staff place a high emphasis on supporting the prime areas of learning, while weaving in other areas of the curriculum. They support children to develop their communication and language skills particularly well. Staff speak clearly and repeat language for children. Throughout the day, children jiggle around with joy as they dance, follow actions, and sing along to familiar songs. Younger children engage in singing rhymes. Older children exclaim as they learn new words, such as 'pigment' and 'bleached', when looking at natural printing.
- Staff use the outdoor space well to support children to develop gross motor skills. They help children to use bikes and climbing equipment, and provide large drawing activities. Staff focus well on strengthening children's hand muscles, in preparation for learning to write later in their development. Children enjoy squishing dough to music and using a pincer grip with their hands in the garden to collect flowers and leaves.
- The manager and staff plan adult-led activities that focus well on what children need to learn next. For example, children engage in printing with natural

resources to support their expanding vocabulary and working as a group, ready for school. However, sometimes, staff are less sure of why other activities have been provided for children and what they want children to learn from them. This means that staff are not consistently providing children with challenging learning to move on their development further.

- Staff offer regular small-group times to children each day. Children are excited about attending them. They listen intently to staff, respond to questions, and sit nicely together in a group. Staff give lots of positive praise to encourage children to focus and persevere. Children excitedly give staff a 'high five' as they learn new sounds in the alphabet.
- Children engage in daily circle times, where staff support them to remember the rules and how to be kind to each other. Staff discuss feelings with children and use resources, such as books and charts, to support their understanding. Children treat each other with respect and kindness, and even find their own sand timers to negotiate sharing resources.
- Leaders are proactive in securing funding and support from other agencies to help all children to be able to access the same opportunities. They are quick to identify children who may need additional support, and put plans in place. Leaders carefully consider how they spend funding and use it to buy resources to help individual children to access the curriculum and the pre-school.
- The manager focuses well on improving all staff's knowledge and well-being. She works closely within a collaboration, where she seeks support and advice and shares best practice. The manager seeks regular training that targets the support needed for children and staff. For example, recent training has focused on different ways to approach teaching maths, and supporting mental health. This supports an evaluative culture, where staff are constantly striving to alter and improve practice to better support the children.

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 identify and plan more precisely what children need to know and learn next, to support staff to consistently provide appropriate challenges to maximise children's learning.

Setting details

Unique reference number	127242
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10335761
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	22
Number of children on roll	26
Name of registered person	Hersden Under 5's Project Committee
Registered person unique reference number	RP519703
Telephone number	01227 713120
Date of previous inspection	27 June 2018

Information about this early years setting

Hersden Under 5's Project registered in 1999. The pre-school is situated within the grounds of Hersden Primary School in Kent. It operates from 8.45am until 4pm, five days per week, during term time only. The pre-school employs six members of staff, four of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 or above. The pre-school is in receipt of funding for the provision of free early years education for two-, three-, and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Nina Harvey

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 manager and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the pre-school.
- The manager and the inspector completed a learning walk together and discussed the curriculum.
- The inspector spoke with staff, interacted with children and viewed appropriate documentation.
- The inspector carried out joint observations with the manager.
- Parents shared their views about the setting with the inspector.

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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