

Inspection of Badgers Bridge Forest School

4 Silverlands Road, Lyminge CT18 8JE

Inspection date: 6 June 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	Not applicable

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children arrive with beaming smiles on their faces and are excited to start their day. They show that they feel safe, and enjoy the freedom to investigate the forest-school environment. When children need reassurance, the caring staff respond quickly. They provide comfort and support, which helps to build children's sense of belonging. The manager plans a curriculum that encourages children to become confident and independent learners, to help them to be ready for the next stage in their development.

Children show enjoyment and great independence during activities, with staff alongside them to facilitate and direct their learning. Children develop a genuine love of books as they listen to familiar stories, such as 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar'. Staff are engaging and encourage children to retell parts of the story. Staff introduce new words to help build children's vocabulary. Children show excitement as they observe real caterpillars turning into chrysalises and learn about the life cycle of a butterfly. Furthermore, staff encourage children to use reference books and pictures to look up what they have found in the forest, to extend their knowledge.

Children behave exceptionally well. Staff give clear and consistent messages to help them to understand what is expected of them to keep safe in the forest. Consequently, children assess risks for themselves and understand why they must walk around the outside of the fire pit. Staff praise children in all they do. This helps to boost their self-esteem and confidence.

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

- The manager and staff have high expectations for all children. They support children well to understand the natural environment. Staff teach children to respect nature and how to care for living things. Children show kindness and consideration as they find insects and create new homes for them. For example, children apply their imagination and use feathers for a pillow and twigs to make a bed. Furthermore, staff teach children to recognise wild garlic and they understand that this must be cooked before it can be eaten.
- Staff carefully plan the environment to provide children with exciting challenges to develop their physical skills. For example, children concentrate as they use real tools, such as saws, hammers, and nails, under close supervision. Children develop their large-muscle skills as they skilfully balance and walk along tree logs and climb up rope ladders.
- Overall, staff have high expectations for what children can achieve. They make use of children's interests and curiosity to support their communication and language development. For example, staff engage children in conversation to

help to develop their understanding of habitats and life cycles. However, on occasion, staff do not give children time to think through questions to help further develop their critical thinking skills.

- Staff provide children with ample of opportunities to help them to develop their independence well. Children confidently use the toilet, wash their hands, prepare snacks, and clear away when they have finished eating. Furthermore, children access the materials they want to use, which helps to develop their decision-making skills.
- Staff provide children with opportunities to learn about various aspects of the natural environment and wildlife. Children learn what makes them unique. For example, they recognises the similarities and differences between themselves and others. However, staff have not fully considered how to provide children with further opportunities to help widen their understanding of diversity in the wider world.
- The manager and staff support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) well. Links with parents and other professionals who support children with SEND are strong. Overall, children make good progress in relation to their capabilities.
- The manager implements safer recruitment and vetting processes to ensure that new staff are suitable for their role and responsibilities. Staff benefit from regular opportunities for supervision and to reflect on their practice. The manager carries out regular observations to support staff's practice and identify any additional training they may need. Staff say that they feel valued and supported and enjoy working at the forest school.
- Staff inform parents of their children's learning and development through daily updates. Parents are extremely happy with the care and learning provided at the setting. They especially like the freedom, where their children benefit from new learning experiences outdoors. They comment that their children are supported to learn how to care for the environment, and make creations using natural resources. Parents comment that their children 'love it here'.

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 consistently allow children sufficient time to think and respond to questions to help develop their thinking skills further
- strengthen opportunities for children to learn about diversity in the wider world.

Setting details

Unique reference number	2661983
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10332918
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Day care type	Sessional day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	2 to 8
Total number of places	15
Number of children on roll	14
Name of registered person	Badgers Bridge LLP
Registered person unique reference number	RP535366
Telephone number	07709420736
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

Badgers Bridge Forest School registered in 2021 and is located in Lyminge, Kent. The setting is open on Thursday from 9am to 3pm during term time. The setting receives funding for early education sessions for children aged two, three and four years. The setting employs five members of staff. Of these, three staff hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 2 or 3. One member of staff holds an early years qualification at level 7.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Nicky Chambers

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the setting 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 manager and inspector completed a learning walk together of all areas of the setting and discussed the early years curriculum.
- The inspector observed the quality of education being provided and assessed the impact that this was having on children's learning.
- The inspector spoke to staff, children and parents and took account of their views.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation with the manager and they discussed the impact the activity was having on children's learning.

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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