Inspection of Chestnut Playgroup

Cathodeon Centre, Horseheath Road, Linton CB21 4LU

Inspection date:	9 May 2025 - 16 June 2025

Overall effectiveness	**Good**
The quality of education	**Good**
Behaviour and attitudes	**Good**
Personal development	**Good**
Leadership and management	**Good**
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children have a strong sense of belonging at the playgroup. Staff take time to greet children personally as they arrive and gather relevant information from parents to ensure that children's needs are understood and met from the outset. Children settle quickly and show they have positive relationships with staff. Throughout the day, routines are well embedded, and transitions are calmly managed. Staff use strategies, such as a tambourine cue, that help children anticipate changes in activities, ensuring structure and helping children to feel secure. Staff manage any behaviour issues between children swiftly, helping them to understand what is expected of them and form positive relationships with their peers.

Staff provide an engaging curriculum that supports children's learning and development. Children enjoy participating in morning group time. Staff use signing and a welcome song to greet each child individually, asking them what they are happy about. This gives children the opportunity to share their feelings, which promotes emotional well-being. Staff thoughtfully organise these activities into two age-based groups, allowing them to tailor learning experiences according to the developmental stages and ensure that teaching is well matched to children's needs. Children confidently use tools for a purpose. They roll out dough and use cutters to make shapes, helping them to build strength in their hands, laying the foundations for early writing skills as they prepare for the next stage of their education.

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

- Outdoor learning is an integral part of the provision. The garden is viewed as an extension of the classroom, offering a wide range of physical and exploratory play. Children climb, balance and navigate obstacle courses, while also engaging in imaginative play in the mud kitchen. An inviting reading area under a tree entices children. Staff take time to share stories with children, nurturing their love for books.
- Staff know their children well. Each child is assigned a key person, ensuring consistency in their care and support. Staff make regular observations to assess children's progress and use these to inform next steps in learning. While the curriculum offered helps children to make good progress in their learning and development, sometimes staff do not always identify and provide specific activities that support the unique next steps of each child.
- The playgroup benefits from strong community partnerships that enrich children's learning. They have established effective links with the local primary school to support smooth transitions. A wide range of community experiences help children understand the world around them, including visits to the fire station and the library. Members of the local church also contribute by visiting

the playgroup to read stories with the children.

- Staff plan purposeful and engaging activities in response to children's emerging interests. For example, children gather around a container of water and explore a variety of materials to predict and test whether the items will sink or float. Staff skilfully facilitate children's learning to promote critical thinking and problem-solving. On some occasions, staff do not organise focused activities well enough to ensure that children benefit from the rich learning opportunities on offer. For example, when group sizes become too large, some children struggle to fully engage and find space to participate in the activity.
- Children's independence is consistently promoted. Children confidently manage self-care routines, such as washing hands and serving their own snack. Staff build on this further by encouraging children to butter their own fruit loaf and identify quantities of snack they would like, using laminated number cards. This supports children's early mathematical development.
- Partnerships with parents are a strength of the playgroup. There are multiple opportunities for parents to be involved in their child's early education, including stay-and-play sessions and termly parents' evenings. Information is shared through an online platform effectively, and a parent noticeboard displays key information about the playgroup.
- Staff receive regular supervision to monitor and reflect on progress. Training opportunities are actively encouraged to help staff build on their skills in order to meet the needs of the children. Leaders have an action plan to drive ongoing improvements in the playgroup to ensure that children have the best outcomes possible.
- The committee plays an active and supportive role in the playgroup. They work closely with the staff team and have clearly defined roles to support leaders. Members of the committee are reflective and have addressed past gaps in their knowledge and practice. They have created an open, honest and positive culture in the playgroup. The committee ensures that policies to safeguard children are reviewed and updated, shared with staff and are fully understood and implemented by all. They have recently updated their processes to track and monitor suitability checks for all committee members. This ensures that the checks are completed prior to committee members taking on key responsibilities.

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 refine learning opportunities that align more consistently with supporting children's next steps
- guide staff in planning focused activities more effectively so that children get the most out of these learning experiences.

Setting details

Unique reference number	221914
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	10380549
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register
Day care type	Sessional day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	2 to 4
Total number of places	24
Number of children on roll	34
Name of registered person	Chestnut Playgroup Committee
Registered person unique reference number	RP904624
Telephone number	07817069696
Date of previous inspection	13 June 2019

Information about this early years setting

Chestnut Playgroup registered in 1999. It is based in Linton and is managed by a voluntary committee. The playgroup employs 12 members of childcare staff. Of these, seven hold relevant qualifications at level 2 or above. The playgroup opens from Monday to Friday during school term times. Sessions are from 9am to 2.30pm. The nursery provides funded early education for all eligible children.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors
Emily Woodhead
Julie Meredith-Jenkins

Inspection activities

- An inspection was completed on 9 May 2025. Information was received after the inspection that made it necessary for a review of the evidence gathered at the inspection against the inspection outcome. An inspector returned on 16 June 2025 to complete the inspection, as per Ofsted's policy for deferring, pausing and gathering additional evidence.
- The manager joined the inspector on a learning walk. She talked to the inspector about the curriculum.
- The inspector observed the quality of education being provided, indoors and outdoors. She discussed the children's progress with staff.
- The inspector held discussions with the management committee.
- The manager and inspector carried out a joint observation of an activity in the garden.
- The inspector looked at relevant documentation. This included evidence of staff suitability, staff training records and safeguarding documents.
- The inspector spoke to parents during the inspection to take 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.

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can complain to Ofsted.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk

This publication is available at https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: http://eepurl.com/iTrDn.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2025