

Inspection of Caterpillars Pre-School

Birch C of E School, School Hill, Birch, COLCHESTER CO2 0LZ

Inspection date: 28 June 2022

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

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is outstanding

Children are highly inquisitive and independent learners. They are eager to learn and practise new skills. Children successfully persevere and challenge themselves. They share, take turns and behaviour expectations are consistently embedded. Children are happy and well cared for by exemplary practitioners. They are highly engaged and focused on their play. Children are confident and self-sufficient with personal care, changing their own clothes, doing up zips and washing hands. Children master skills, such as pouring, as practitioners encourage them to repeatedly practise and repeat.

Children experiment in the extremely well-resourced mud kitchen. They dispense coloured water from bottles and turn the handle on the container to make the soil come out. Children collect their potions in different sized pots and whisk in their chosen herbs. Children explore the work bench area, using tools safely. They explore the sand pit builders' site, mixing their own cement using water and sand. Children make an exciting discovery of 'dinosaur bones' in the sand and talk about how they may have got there.

Children squeal with excitement as they roll down the hill in the grass and chase each other in the wind. They sit together under the trees and read imaginative stories with excitement. Children have the freedom to play and explore in an environment where learning is fun. Children learn to be conscientious about the environment and world around them. The enriching opportunities enable children to make excellent progress from their starting points. Highly skilled practitioners consistently capture moments to challenge and extend children's learning further.

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

- The quality of education is outstanding. The manager and her team of practitioners are highly ambitious and passionate about what they do. They recognise the importance of the role they play in children succeeding and having the best possible start in the early years. Practitioners are outstanding role models. Their morale is exceptionally high, and their well-being is a priority for the manager. They attend extensive professional development and training, reflecting on their practice and the impact it has on children's learning outcomes. Children are making excellent progress and, in some cases, they are exceeding in their learning and development. Children are very well prepared for the next stages of their education.
- Books and stories are brought to life by imaginative practitioners. Children are exposed to extensive new vocabulary, such as 'consistency', 'discovery', and 'hydration'. Practitioners encourage them to ask questions and share their own ideas. Children eagerly make contributions, and these are valued by attentive

practitioners. Practitioners skilfully extend learning through books. Children eagerly explore the hungry caterpillar tray, retelling the story using props. They confidently name the cocoon, and know the caterpillar stays inside for two weeks. Practitioners introduce the word 'ravenous' and explain to children how hungry the caterpillar is.

- Practitioners use number language in everyday opportunities, supporting an introduction to early mathematics. Children count confidently up to 10 and beyond. Children use writing and experiment with mark making in their play. Practitioners write messages on notes and invite children to share these and write back with messages.
- Children are exposed to a language-rich environment, giving them an excellent start with their communication skills. Children vote to make decisions as a group and their voices, thoughts and feelings are heard. Practitioners use imaginative ways to support this. They encourage children to line up for the choice they have made, stand up or sit down.
- Children show consistent interest and engagement in exciting and creative experiences. They explore the creation station and extend this into imaginative role play. The children dress up in school uniforms and pretend they are going to their new school. Children say, 'I am going to school' as they pack rucksacks and jump on the pretend play bus to travel to school. These unique opportunities support children to prepare for school. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities thrive in the inclusive environment and they achieve the best possible outcomes.
- Partnership working is outstanding. Parents praise the practitioners and have the highest regard for their caring and nurturing relationships with children. They say practitioners are kind, approachable and helpful. The key person and manager carry out home visits to support children settling and have completed home visits since the COVID-19 pandemic to swiftly identify any learning needs. Parents share that their children thrive and grow at the pre-school. They are complimentary about how much progress they can see at home from the learning that takes place at pre-school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Practitioners are exceedingly knowledgeable about how to keep children safe. They know how to recognise the signs of possible abuse and how to report any concerns they may have about a child. Practitioners attend appropriate training and keep up to date with current local issues. They know about the 'Prevent' duty and the local authority reporting procedures. They teach children how to keep themselves safe in an age-appropriate way. Practitioners know what to do if they are concerned about the behaviour of another adult and the pre-school's whistle-blowing procedures. The pre-school has robust procedures in place to check practitioners are suitable to work with children.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY422633
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10127332
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	3 to 4
Total number of places	16
Number of children on roll	22
Name of registered person	Caterpillars Pre-School
Registered person unique reference number	RP905068
Telephone number	07840 857592
Date of previous inspection	9 October 2014

Information about this early years setting

Caterpillars Pre-School registered in 2010. The pre-school opens Monday to Thursday, 9am to 2.45pm, term time only. The pre-school employs four practitioners who work with the children. All practitioners have an early years qualification at level 3. The pre-school provides funded early education for three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Helen Clutterham

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 provider and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the pre-school.
- The manager joined the inspector on a learning walk and talked to the inspector about their curriculum and what they want the children to learn.
- The inspector carried out joint observations of group activities with the manager.
- The inspector observed practitioners and children interacting, both indoors and outdoors.
- The inspector looked at relevant documentation and reviewed evidence of the suitability of staff working in the pre-school.
- The inspector spoke to several parents during the inspection and 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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