

Inspection of Windmill Nursery School

22-23 Overcliffe, GRAVESEND DA11 0EH

Inspection date: 16 January 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	Not applicable

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Leaders and staff create a warm, friendly, home-from-home environment for children and their families. Staff make sure that settling-in sessions are tailored to the individual needs of the child and their family. This attention to detail continues as children progress through the nursery and eventually transition to school. Staff focus on prioritising children's well-being, helping to support children to gain a sense of belonging and feel safe and secure at nursery.

Staff have established a focused curriculum that fosters children's confidence and curiosity. For instance, babies are eager to explore the textures of the balls as they climb in and out of the ball pit. Toddlers practise using the steps in the room before going down the slide. All children have opportunities to develop good physical skills from a young age. Outside, staff provide children with a wide range of experiences to explore and exercise. Older children learn how to move their bodies and develop positional awareness. For example, they balance on beams and join in running games with their peers as they build muscle strength.

Children's behaviour is good and appropriate for their age and stage of development. Staff support children to understand their emotions and encourage them to talk about their feelings. Children are kind to their friends and are learning to share as they engage in social activities. For instance, in the garden, the children help each other to fill bags with leaves ready to decorate the bear cave they have made.

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

- Staff are highly knowledgeable about their key children. They can discuss each child's current developmental levels and outline plans for their next steps in learning. The leaders have established secure procedures to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, as well as those who speak English as an additional language. For example, staff use sign language and provide dual-language books to enhance children's communication skills. They liaise closely with other professionals and put in place targeted support for children who need additional assistance. As a result, all children make the progress they are capable of achieving.
- Communication and language development is a high priority throughout the nursery. Staff use commentary effectively to ensure babies and children hear a rich vocabulary that strengthens their language skills. For example, staff describe the feel of the crunchy leaves as the babies investigate the natural objects in the sand tray. Toddlers are encouraged to explore textures as they participate in activities, such as looking to see what is in the box. Staff support the toddlers as they take turns to find the 'squidgy' sponge and 'spiky' dinosaur.

They skilfully introduce descriptive language into children's games and sensory play.

- Leaders are devoted to their role and place a strong emphasis on maintaining staff's well-being. They offer a variety of training to help staff develop their practice. Staff are skilled in planning a well-sequenced curriculum throughout the nursery. They incorporate children's interests and focus on their next steps in learning. However, on occasion, some less confident staff are not consistent in supporting children to help extend their learning and gain the most from their activities.
- The leaders and staff have a strong focus on providing babies and toddlers with an environment that engages and stimulates their curiosity. Pre-school children enjoy the challenge of bringing stories to life as they act in different movements while hunting for the bear. The pre-school rooms offer a variety of activities for children to interact with. However, there is a difference in quality between the resources and experiences for children in the different pre-school rooms. As a result, older children do not consistently receive equal opportunities to develop their knowledge and skills.
- Mathematical exploration is evident throughout the nursery. There is a strong focus on counting and teaching children about shapes from an early age. For instance, staff working with toddlers discuss concepts like 'full' and 'empty' as the children fill various containers with water. Older children use a magnifying glass to find shapes and numbers in their environment. Staff actively identify opportunities to introduce mathematical language throughout the day.
- Staff recognise the crucial part parents play in supporting their children. They work closely with parents to support learning at home. For instance, they offer a lending library for children and inform parents of activities they can do at home to help enhance children's learning. Parents enjoy visiting the nursery to share their skills. For example, they have conducted exercise classes and made bracelets with the children. Parents are extremely complimentary about the caring support they receive from the dedicated staff team.

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 less confident staff to help embed teaching securely and consistently across the nursery
- review and improve the indoor learning environments to strengthen the

opportunities older children have to engage in a breadth of experiences that cover all areas of learning.

Setting details

Unique reference number	2685385
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10363685
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	0 to 4
Total number of places	82
Number of children on roll	119
Name of registered person	Storal Nurseries Limited
Registered person unique reference number	RP524868
Telephone number	01474 332255
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

Windmill Nursery School registered in 2022. It is located in Gravesend, Kent. The nursery is owned by Storal Nurseries Limited. It operates for 51 weeks of the year from 7.30am until 6.30pm, from Monday to Friday. The provider employs 25 members of staff at this nursery. Of these, 17 hold a relevant early years qualification at level 2 or above. One member of staff has achieved a level 6 qualification. The nursery provides funded early years education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Sara Garrity

Inspection activities

- The manager and inspector completed a learning walk together of all areas used by the nursery and discussed how they implement the early years curriculum.
- The inspector observed the quality of education being provided, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact that this was having on children's learning.
- Children spoke with the inspector at various times throughout the inspection.
- The inspector read letters of reference and spoke to several parents and carers during the inspection to take into account their views on the nursery.
- The manager and inspector carried out a joint observation on an adult-directed activity in the toddler room.
- The inspector looked at relevant documentation and reviewed evidence of the suitability of staff working in the nursery.

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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