



Hillside Playcare The Hillside Barn

We are OUTSTANDING



Inspection of The Hillside Barn

St Martin's Church Barn, Brook Hill, Little Waltham, Essex CM3 3LJ

Inspection date:

21 October 2021

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is outstanding

Children make excellent progress in their learning at this inspiring pre-school. They are extremely happy and demonstrate that they clearly enjoy their time during the day. Experiences start even before they enter the building. Questions are left on the notice board outside to stimulate conversations between parents and children about their learning at pre-school. Children form exceptionally strong bonds with the adults that care for them, helping them to feel safe and secure. This also supports the children to have the confidence to explore their environment independently.

Staff go to exceptional lengths to create play areas for children to explore and make their own choices in play. A varied selection of resources is on offer, which staff have carefully chosen to extend children's interest and learning experiences. Children are curious and excited to explore, showing high levels of engagement and concentration. For example, children work together to carry heavy watering cans from the water butt to the water tray. They explore how syringes work, showing great pleasure in squirting water 'really far'.

Children consistently show high levels of respect for one another. They listen to each other and take turns as they play collaboratively together. Adults are excellent role models, encouraging children to solve problems and find solutions to any issues. Children frequently learn about mathematical concepts throughout their play. They recognise the numeral of the day at the snack table and cut the matching number of pieces of fruit.

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

- The manager and staff positively share and promote the vision for the setting. The manager and staff ensure that the curriculum complements that of the sister setting that the children also attend. Daily reflection enables the staff to continually evolve the learning experiences. They know the children they care for extremely well, demonstrating a deep knowledge of children's individual needs. Staff consistently deliver high-quality interactions with children, which build effectively on what they already know. Children react positively to staff during their play, inviting staff to join them.
- Staff provide a rich curriculum both in and away from the pre-school. For example, children spend time in the local community, going for walks and visiting the local woods. Staff engage the children in exciting and challenging activities, such as den building. Children are learning about looking after the environment. For instance, they collect rubbish while on a walk and staff discuss how this might impact on the local wildlife.
- Staff say that they feel extremely well supported. They enjoy working at the pre-

school and their well-being is of high priority. The manager sees the value of investing in the staff team. She researches information that helps her to provide additional guidance for staff well-being.

- Children benefit greatly from the outstanding focus placed on shared learning with their families. Challenges are set for children to extend their learning at home and then share in the pre-school so they can celebrate their achievements together. Children proudly share a photograph of the den they made, talking about the material that was needed and who helped.
- Children demonstrate excellent independence and positive attitudes to their play and learning. For example, children concentrate intently as they play with dough to create a 'pizza cake'. They develop the role play into a birthday party, counting candles and singing to their friends. This helps children to develop and consolidate new skills.
- Children benefit from the excellent role modelling of language that the staff use. Explanations support children's understanding and consistent use of new language in their play. For example, when a child uses the word 'huge', staff help others to understand what this means. During the session, the word huge is used on many occasions to embed children's understanding of it.
- Parents are very positive about the pre-school and the staff. They comment that they are well informed about their child's learning and feel that their children will be well prepared for school. Parents state that their children love coming every week and that they grow in confidence. During the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown periods, staff kept in touch frequently with children and families, providing ideas for activities they could do together. This helped children to feel secure and highly confident on return to the pre-school.
- Children think critically and they are confident to ask questions. Staff expertly engage them in conversations, encouraging them to share their thoughts and expand their knowledge. They talk about caring for their teeth and invite children who have recently visited the dentist to talk about their experiences.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The management team and staff have a robust understanding of their role and responsibilities in protecting children from harm. They confidently describe the procedures they would follow if they had any concerns about a child's welfare. They demonstrate clear understanding of the signs and symptoms of abuse, including concerns around the wider issues of safeguarding. Staff discuss the issue of safeguarding during staff meetings. The designated officer finds innovative ways to check staff understanding. Robust recruitment procedures ensure all those working with children are suitable. Staff carry out thorough daily risk assessments to ensure that children play in a safe and secure environment.

Setting details

Unique reference number	2518555
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10194562
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register
Day care type	Sessional day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	3 to 4
Total number of places	16
Number of children on roll	11
Name of registered person	Talbot, Maxine Louise
Registered person unique reference number	RP906777
Telephone number	07792 838328
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

The Hillside Barn registered in 2019 and is located in Little Waltham, Essex. This is an enrichment group, which forms part of a larger pre-school located in the same village. The setting employs three members of childcare staff. The manager holds a level 6 qualification and one staff member holds a level 3 qualification. The setting currently opens on a Thursday morning from 9am until 1pm during term time. The setting provides funded early years education for three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Lisa Weston

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the provider 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 provider.
- The inspector spoke to staff, parents and children at appropriate times throughout the inspection.
- A learning walk was completed with the manager to discuss the curriculum intent and how the provision is organised.
- The inspector completed a joint evaluation of an activity with the manager.
- The inspector held a meeting with the manager. She reviewed a variety of documents, including evidence of the suitability of staff, qualifications and first-aid certificates.
- The inspector observed interactions between staff and children during activities indoors and outside and assessed the impact of teaching 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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