

Forest kindergarten

Emmetts Park, Sundridge Road Ide Hill, SEVENOAKS, Kent, TN14 6JU

Inspection date

Previous inspection date

15/05/2014

Not Applicable

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This inspection:

1

Previous inspection:

Not Applicable

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend	1
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children	1
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision	1

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision is outstanding

- Children learn in a natural and rich outdoor classroom with highly motivated staff. Strategies to engage parents in children learning and development are highly successful. This means children's individual needs are extremely well met and they develop skills for future learning.
- Staff teach children how to manage risks and challenges so children develop high levels of independence in their ideas and actions.
- Staff are skilful in planning activities which motivate children to learn. This ensures all children make significant progress from their starting points.
- Children form strong relationships with staff and are safe and secure within their environment.
- Children are able to flourish in their environment and co-operate well with each other.

Information about this inspection

Inspections of registered early years provision are:

- scheduled at least once in every inspection cycle – the current cycle ends on 31 July 2016
- scheduled more frequently where Ofsted identifies a need to do so, for example where provision was previously judged inadequate
- brought forward in the inspection cycle where Ofsted has received information that suggests the provision may not be meeting the legal requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage or where assessment of the provision identifies a need for early inspection
- prioritised where we have received information that the provision is not meeting the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and which suggests children may not be safe
- scheduled at the completion of an investigation into failure to comply with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The provision is also registered on the compulsory part of the Childcare Register. This report includes a judgment about compliance with the requirements of that register.

Inspection activities

- The inspector spoke with parents.
- The inspector sampled relevant documents and policies.
- The inspector observed a variety of activities.
- The inspector held meeting with the provider.
- The inspector invited the manager to carry out a joint observation

Inspector

Tracey Murphy

Full report

Information about the setting

Forest Kindergarten Sevenoaks is a Forest School setting run by a private owner. It registered in 2013 and operates from private woodland owned by the National Trust in Ide Hill, Kent. It is situated within woodland and there is a bell tent to provide some shelter. It is open Monday-Thursday from 9am to 12 noon, term time only. The setting is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory part of the Childcare Register. There are currently 26 children on roll. The manager holds an appropriate early years qualification at level 3 and qualification in Forest School. Other staff both employed and volunteers hold appropriate qualifications. Children enjoy learning and discovering through natural environment.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

To further improve the quality of the early years provision the provider should:

- create stronger links with other provisions where children also attend, to fully complement and enhance their learning experiences.

Inspection judgements

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend

Children learn in a natural 'classroom', staff support children's learning in a completely child-led, vibrant environment. The provider and staff team demonstrate an extremely secure understanding of how children learn and develop and as a result, children flourish and make excellent progress in all areas of learning. Activities are planned directly from children's interests, for instance children are interested in tying things together, staff provide lots of rope and teach children to tie knots to build ladders and zip wire. Staff provide activities in an excellent environment to motivate their curiosity and eagerness to learn. Staff observe and assess children's learning to ensure they flourish within their environment. For instance weekly meetings are held to discuss observations gathered and these are assessed to ensure all areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage are covered. This ensures all activities are based on children's individual interests and needs. Staff motivate children to learn, providing language and praise throughout activities. Parents speak of the 'change in their child's confidence and energy'. Staff encourage children to problem solve and persevere with challenges, for example, drilling holes in logs to hang on the tree. When children become tired staff suggest a little rest before continuing. Children are confident and independent, enthusiastically discussing what they find. For instance, using factual cards to identify insects they find. Children gently remove and compare size of slugs they find explaining they found an 'enormous slug as big as my hand' comparing these to ones they found on day of inspection as 'baby ones because they are smaller'.

Staff sensitively support children's learning in a natural and relaxed way, showing unlimited interest to their needs. For example, helping children to find appropriate sticks to take on the walk with them as 'the sticks were needed as a train for when legs got tired'. Throughout all activities staff are on hand to provide children with information, to challenge and to provide words that extends children's vocabulary. Staff enable children to think critically and problem solve by working through various options, for example during den building, which stick will balance where best and the angle of the sticks so as the den is 'comfortable to sit in'.

Strategies are fully embedded to engage parents in their children's learning. Staff offer daily feedback to parents and meet formally each term with parents to discuss their child's progress. Parents receive regular updates through emails and photographs as well as a diary of activities children have enjoyed. Parents are encouraged to comment on the termly report and any comments are included where ever possible. Parents are extremely happy with the teaching their children receive.

The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children

Children eagerly start their day, confidently separating from their parent. Staff develop strong attachments with children and this enables them to explore their stimulating environment with confidence. Staff skilfully identify where children need additional support, for example waiting until children are ready to put their comforters on one side. Therefore children's emotional wellbeing is exceptionally well supported and children are well prepared for transitions between setting or school.

Parents are extremely pleased with the setting and say children are 'excited' to attend. Parents say the relaxed and calm approach allows the children to discover nature and the world safely. Staff provide regular information about children's learning to parents and value parent's input into their child's learning.

Children behave exceptionally well. Exciting resources and a changing natural environment enables staff to provide problem solving activities which give unlimited opportunities for children to learn and work co-operatively. For instance, children climb trees and are respectful of each other's uncertainties. Parents and staff discuss and agree behaviour management strategies which staff consistently implement. Staff are exemplary role models in their interactions with children and turn negative actions into positive ones.

Staff carry out thorough risk assessments to help ensure children are safe at all times. All practise regular fire evacuation practices ensure they know what to do in an emergency.

Daily walks teach children about safety on roads as well around the countryside. For instance children stop and wait when they hear a tractor in order to determine where it is, as well as what is safe to pick in the woods. Children enjoyed exploring what to do with 'sticky weed' and collect cow parsley along their walk, keen to explain that cow parsley is 'ok to pick because it is in abundance, but not to pick bluebells.' Staff have limitless resources to select for challenging activities which teach the children how to manage risks.

As a result children have many exciting opportunities to learn how to keep themselves safe.

Children receive excellent support in developing a healthy lifestyle. They enjoy helping to prepare snack on a table they helped to make using resources from the woods. Staff discuss why it is important to wash hands particularly after touching insects, as well as before food. Snack time is enjoyed by all sitting around on logs and is a social time with lots of conversation and songs. Children enjoy singing with the accompaniment of a guitar and are eager to give staff suggestions.

Children settle into their outdoor learning gradually, parents are encouraged to gradually leave their child and go for a walk, but only when the child suggests it. The strong focus on developing independent learning and problem solving mean children are exceptionally well prepared for the next steps in their learning.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision

The provider and staff team continuously drive to improve each session, their calm and motivating approach enables children to enjoy their time at forest school and to achieve. This is demonstrated through children's progress in such a short time.

A fully embedded key person system ensures children's 'Learning journals' are informative for parents as well as activities being unique to children. This system helps staff to enable children to settle into their environment and to make attachments on their own terms. This means that the child often decides who their key person is.

Regular and robust supervisions enables staff and volunteers to build their skills through additional training or coaching from each other. Staff are supported by the provider to enhance their skills and knowledge in the forest school ethos. Regular mandatory training such as safeguarding and first aid are accessed through the local authority. The staff team work closely with each other and all relevant information about each session passed on.

Safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage are securely understood. Staff have a full understanding of the setting's child protection policies and procedures, which means they safeguard children in their care effectively. Management fully understand their role in working with Ofsted and following their local Safeguarding Children Board procedures. There are rigorous recruitment and vetting procedures that ensure staff are suitable and qualified to work with children. The staff team are very aware of day-to-day safety and are vigilant to ensure visitors are accounted for at all times.

An informative pack for parents provides them with a user-friendly version of all the relevant policies and procedures. The provider refers parents to the setting's website for any additional information and she mails diaries to keep parents up to date on a regular basis. The provider has made links with some settings children attend to help ensure

continuity of learning, but this system is not yet fully embedded to provide the same levels of support for all the children who currently attend other settings. All required documentation and record keeping is well maintained and available for inspection.

The provider and staff team constantly analyse their work to identify strengths and weaknesses. Development plans are used to drive improvements such as adapting their morning to incorporate the daily walk to support children's extended learning. The impact on the children's learning is evident in their progress. The setting is evolving daily and is unique in that it uses the natural environment to maintain this.

The Childcare Register

The requirements for the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are **Met**

What inspection judgements mean

Registered early years provision

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	Outstanding provision is highly effective in meeting the needs of all children exceptionally well. This ensures that children are very well prepared for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 2	Good	Good provision is effective in delivering provision that meets the needs of all children well. This ensures children are ready for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	The provision is not giving children a good standard of early years education and/or there are minor breaches of the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be monitored and inspected within twelve months of the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	Provision that is inadequate requires significant improvement and/or enforcement action. The provision is failing to give children an acceptable standard of early years education and/or is not meeting the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be monitored and inspected again within six months of the date of this inspection.
Met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider continues to meet the requirements for registration.
Not met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider does not meet the requirements for registration.

Inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted 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.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY469862
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	942472
Type of provision	Sessional provision
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	3 - 8
Total number of places	14
Number of children on roll	26
Name of provider	Caroline Elizabeth Watts
Date of previous inspection	not applicable
Telephone number	07718896919

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Type of provision

For the purposes of this inspection the following definitions apply:

Full-time provision is that which operates for more than three hours. These are usually known as nurseries, nursery schools and pre-schools and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the higher fee for registration.

Sessional provision operates for more than two hours but does not exceed three hours in any one day. These are usually known as pre-schools, kindergartens or nursery schools

and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the lower fee for registration.

Childminders care for one or more children where individual children attend for a period of more than two hours in any one day. They operate from domestic premises, which are usually the childminder's own home. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Out of school provision may be sessional or full-time provision and is delivered before or after school and/or in the summer holidays. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. Where children receive their Early Years Foundation Stage in school these providers do not have to deliver the learning and development requirements in full but should complement the experiences children receive in school.

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