

Exeter Forest School

Shillingford St. George, Exeter, EX2 9QL



Inspection date

Previous inspection date

28 February 2018

Not applicable

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	Good	2
	Previous inspection:	Not applicable	
Effectiveness of the leadership and management		Good	2
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Good	2
Personal development, behaviour and welfare		Outstanding	1
Outcomes for children		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents

This provision is good

- Children have very high levels of confidence and very skilfully assess risks independently to keep themselves safe in their play. For example, they climb trees and ladders competently, recognising when to stop, so they do not get stuck, and adeptly identify and follow the rules without prompt when helping staff to light a fire.
- The manager and staff establish strong links with all other settings that children attend. They routinely exchange information, to help them work together to target children's next steps in learning and provide complementary care routines.
- Staff provide an extremely stimulating environment outdoors that encourages children to explore and investigate. Children develop a highly positive attitude to learning as they experiment and test out their ideas, and make good progress across all areas.
- The provider and manager reflect on their practice accurately and work together well to recognise and address areas for development. They are ambitious and determined to provide the best possible care and experiences for children and their families.

It is not yet outstanding because:

- Support for staff does not have a strong enough emphasis on their practice to raise the quality of teaching even further, in particular to ensure staff make the best use of opportunities to consistently extend the learning of the older and most able children.
- At times, during whole-group activities, staff do not support children to share, listen to and explore their ideas as well as they could.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- strengthen the support and coaching provided for staff to focus more precisely on their practice, to ensure teaching consistently extends the learning of the older and most able children as well as possible
- enhance whole-group activities to provide more opportunities for children to share, listen to and discuss each other's thoughts and ideas.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed children as they played in the outdoor environment and interacted with staff.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation with the manager to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning.
- The inspector took account of the views of staff, children and parents spoken to during the inspection.
- The inspector held a meeting with the manager and provider at an appropriate time during the day.
- The inspector sampled a range of documentation, including self-evaluation records, risk assessments, policies and children's learning records.

Inspector

Sarah Madge

Inspection findings

Effectiveness of the leadership and management is good

Safeguarding is effective. The manager and staff clearly understand how to identify any child who may be at risk of harm and know how to take appropriate action if they have a concern. They vigilantly risk assess the outdoor play area to keep children safe. For example, they provide a visual reminder for children that they need to ask for staff's permission before using the woodwork tools. Staff benefit from regular opportunities to enhance their professional development through training. For example, they have become more confident to allow children to take managed risks and follow their own interests. As a result, children confidently try new things and make decisions in their play. The manager reflects well on the provision and effectively tracks children's progress, to identify and address any patterns in learning. For instance, she is currently increasing the opportunities for children to learn about the uses of technology.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

Staff work well with parents to assess children's progress and successfully identify next steps in learning together. For example, they help children learn how to make different colours by mixing paint at home and at the kindergarten. Staff use their good knowledge of each child to plan purposeful activities that overall, meet children's individual developmental needs well. For instance, children develop coordination as they make bird feeders. They develop an interest in nature as they talk about what birds eat and eagerly observe the birds when they visit the garden. Staff routinely model a broad vocabulary to teach children new words, such as 'hibernation' and 'nocturnal'. Staff support children's mathematical development well, for example, they regularly count with them.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare are outstanding

Children's physical health and emotional well-being benefit greatly from the varied and very positive opportunities to exercise and learn outdoors, with a superb range of natural materials. Children are very happy and content in the staff's care, and settle in very quickly. They spontaneously tell staff that they love them and delightedly involve staff in their play. Staff are respectful, kind and excellent role models of their expectations. Children behave extremely well. For instance, they show great care and concern for others by making sure they can all join in with activities, such as finding sticks for them to use to help 'smash' the ice. Children competently manage many of their self-care needs, such as putting on and taking off gloves, coats and boots, and pouring hot drinks.

Outcomes for children are good

Children gain the key skills needed in readiness for school. They demonstrate a good attitude to learning and are eager to initiate and take part in activities. Children develop good physical skills, such as when balancing along beams, using scissors and writing their name. In particular, children are highly interested in and motivated to learn about the environment through their excellent first-hand experiences and observations. For instance, they mix coloured 'ice slush' to see what will happen.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY493374
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	1026117
Type of provision	Full-time provision
Day care type	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Age range of children	3 - 5
Total number of places	15
Number of children on roll	25
Name of registered person	South West Outdoors Group Ltd
Registered person unique reference number	RP533537
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable
Telephone number	01392 832399

Exeter Forest School registered in 2015 in the village of Shillingford St George, on the outskirts of Exeter. The kindergarten follows the 'forest school' approach and opens between 9am and 3pm, Monday to Wednesday, term times only. There are three members of staff employed to work with children. One member of staff holds a relevant degree, the manager holds a level 3 qualification in childcare and has Forest School Leader training, and the third member of staff is forest school trained and pursuing their leader qualification. The setting receives funding for the provision of free early education for children aged three and four years.

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