

Inspection of The Children's Garden

The Walled Garden, Colney Hall, Watton Road, Norwich NR4 7TY

Inspection date: 21 January 2020

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
The quality of education	Outstanding
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not applicable

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is outstanding

Children learn within an inspirational setting, which leaders and managers have created using their significant knowledge and experience. Much thought goes into planning and preparing the exceptional environment, with careful consideration to the interests of the children. While children primarily learn in the outdoors, they also engage in exciting, challenging activities in indoor areas. These include the very well-equipped tepee tent and in the cosy yurt. Children are highly motivated to explore, experiment and take safe risks. They are learning to manage their own behaviour exceptionally well. They show awe and wonder as they are exposed to rich new experiences, many of which unfold naturally as they play.

Babies have their personal care needs extremely well met, as staff use a highly effective key-person system to full effect. This particularly supports babies' well-being. Babies, guided by nurturing staff, explore the beautifully presented, accessible activities, many of which focus on sensory experiences. Older children particularly benefit from the staff's excellent teaching skills, which ignite their curiosity and inspire them to learn. Toddlers show high levels of engagement as they mix flour and water together to make dough. Children savour new knowledge and vocabulary as they explore the properties of ice, which they carefully collect during their walk to the river. Children learn about the 'wolf moon' in the evening sky, comparing it to a very large football.

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

- Children, including those with special educational needs, have exceptional opportunities to be independent and make choices. They decide what they want to do and where they wish to play. Older children choose when they want to eat lunch, before they negotiate the 'special' slide into the dining room. They show high levels of self-care, taking off their outdoor wear before serving themselves to lunch, adeptly using tongs.
- Staff closely observe and assess children's progress, taking children's interests into account when planning next steps. For example, children's knowledge of counting and calculating is extended when they play on their own 'building site', replicating construction work that they have seen happening next door to the nursery.
- Children have exceptional opportunities to enjoy and learn about where food comes from. They eat nutritious meals and have fun eating outside at forest school. Children dig, and later plant and harvest fruit and vegetables in the walled garden. They help to feed the chickens, collecting eggs to take home. They engage in baking a wide variety of breads on most days, and eating these for tea.
- Children, including those who speak English as an additional language, are

provided with excellent opportunities to speak, learn new language and explore literacy skills. Staff skilfully ask children questions to help them think. Children listen with interest, as staff read stories with great animation and intonation. Others have great fun role playing in the outdoor puppet area. Older children practise sounds that letters represent, with staff's support. They name items that they want to take on their pretend picnic and write for purpose as they make their own list.

- Staff, who have an excellent breadth of qualifications, experience and skills, show a genuine enthusiasm and passion for their work with children. The management team uses extremely effective ways to support staff and manage performance. Close monitoring, supportive intervention and role modelling ensure areas for development are swiftly addressed to maintain a high quality of teaching and learning.
- Partnerships with parents are particularly strong. Parents have regular opportunities to meet with staff. They receive written and visual updates about their children in an innovative way, through an interactive online platform. They have excellent opportunities to borrow books to read to their children or resources to use with them at home. Invitations to attend practical workshops, on popular topics, go even further to help parents to become more deeply involved in their children's learning.
- A focus on continuous professional development, and exceptional reflective practice, ensures that this nursery is constantly being reviewed and improved. In the time since registration, there have been a wealth of improvements to enhance provision for children. Plans are already underway to further improve the outdoor learning environment, particularly for babies and toddlers and to extend parental engagement even further.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and managers create a robust culture of safeguarding, which is given utmost priority. This is underpinned by strong partnership working. Staff have a secure knowledge and understanding of safeguarding procedures and this is further embedded by regular training. Robust safe recruitment and vetting practices are followed, to ensure that all staff are suitable to work with children. Dynamic risk assessments of the learning environment are embedded in practice. Staff are very well deployed and continually assess risk, even as the activities are taking place, to ensure children can play, freely explore and take appropriate risks, in safety.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY549988
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10130068
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children	0 to 5
Total number of places	118
Number of children on roll	136
Name of registered person	The Children's Garden Day Nursery Partnership
Registered person unique reference number	RP532409
Telephone number	07557 443850
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

The Children's Garden registered in 2017 and operates from premises in the grounds of Colney Hall in Norwich, Norfolk. The nursery follows a Montessori approach to learning and mainly operates in an outdoor environment. It employs 36 staff. These staff hold a variety of appropriate early years qualifications from level 3. This includes nine staff who are qualified to degree level or beyond, four staff who are Montessori trained and further staff who have completed forest-school training. The nursery is open from Monday to Friday, all year round, with the exception of weekends and bank holidays. Sessions are from 7.45am until 6pm, with a 'PJ' club operating from 7.30am each day. The setting accepts funding for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Dawn Pointer

Inspection activities

- The inspector conducted a tour of the nursery building, the walled garden, the forest school and estate grounds with the manager and discussed how the early years provision and curriculum are organised.
- The inspector observed the learning environment, inside and outside, and interactions between the staff and the children.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation, of two specific activities, with the designated curriculum leader.
- The inspector spoke to the provider, the manager, deputies, staff and the children during the inspection.
- The inspector held a meeting with the provider and management team, and looked at a sample of relevant documents, including evidence of suitability checks.
- The inspector spoke to a number of 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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