

Inspection of Western Elms Nursery

59 Western Elms Avenue, READING, Berkshire RG30 2AL

Inspection date: 8 April 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Outstanding

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision requires improvement

Children enjoy their time at this nursery. They are welcomed by friendly staff and arrive eager to learn. They quickly settle to the routines of the day. Children do not always get opportunities to reach their full potential, although, overall, they make adequate progress in their learning. Children demonstrate that they feel safe and secure. Overall, they behave well, although older children sometimes are not fully engaged, for example, during group times.

Children love spending time outdoors. Babies move around freely as they practise their balancing skills on see-saws. Older children run, jump and climb with increased confidence. However, the range of resources to promote older children's physical development further is limited. For instance, children enjoy playing on the climbing frame but this equipment does not provide enough challenge for older children.

Overall, children socialise well together. They develop into keen talkers and hold interesting conversations with each other. For example, when it is snack time, older children discuss whether they should eat the skin of a pear. Children's imagination is developed well through the use of books and role play. For instance, toddlers want others to join in their play. They happily pretend to go shopping and think about what to buy. Older children like to play interesting games about dragons and sharks.

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

- Leaders have a clear focus on what they want children to learn, although this is not always well communicated to the staff. They do not check the effectiveness of teaching on a regular basis to help identify staff who may need more support to improve their skills. Staff's quality of teaching for younger children is more effective than that for older children. Staff working with older children do not always prepare activities that challenge them and match their needs accurately. Staff working with younger children have recently received training on how to support babies to talk. This shows a positive impact in their progress. For example, babies say words like 'pat, pat' when they play with sand.
- Staff work with children to prepare them for their next stage in learning. Younger children are supported to develop the skills they need. Older children are adequately prepared for their move to school with some focus on early reading and writing. Children show developing independence when they make choices in their play and as they select own resources. However, staff working with older children do not always plan well enough for the routines of the day. Staff are sometimes too quick to complete tasks that children could learn to manage themselves. For example, at mealtimes staff cut fruit and pour drinks

for them.

- Parents speak positively about the care their children receive. Staff gather suitable information from parents about their children when they start the nursery. This helps them know more about children's interests and personalities.
- Staff effectively help children to develop their mathematical knowledge and understanding. Children learn mathematical vocabulary, such as 'taller' and 'shorter', as they compare their different heights.
- Children develop a greater understanding about healthy lifestyles. They talk about the importance of milk as part of a healthy diet. Older children say that babies need warm milk to help them rest. They know that milk is kept in the fridge to keep cold and stop it from going bad. Children show they can make connections with what they do at nursery to their own experiences at home. This helps children make sense of the world around them.
- Children are given hands-on experiences which they enjoy. Younger children explore the texture of different breakfast cereals. They hear and use words such as 'pop' and 'crunch'. This builds on their vocabulary.
- Leaders have identified improvements to support children's learning further. For instance, staff recently attended training on the 'Curiosity Approach', and have a vision to develop this in the nursery. They would like children to handle more natural resources. Leaders understand the importance for children to develop their inquisitive nature further as they explore and handle a range of resources.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders understand their responsibilities to safeguard children. Staff can identify the signs and symptoms that a child might be at risk. They understand the local procedures to follow should they need to report a concern about a child's welfare. Leaders provide safeguarding updates to staff. Staff show awareness of wider safeguarding issues, such as children being exposed to extremist views and behaviours. Leaders follow effective recruitment and vetting procedures to check the suitability of staff to work with children. Staff ensure the environment is safe and secure for children. They carry out daily risk assessments, indoors and outdoors to minimise potential hazards.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

To meet the requirements of the early years foundation stage, the provider must:

	Due date
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ensure all staff receive effective support, coaching and training to fulfil their roles, to identify and target weaker aspects and improve their personal effectiveness.	01/07/2022
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To further improve the quality of the early years provision, the provider should:

- provide more challenging opportunities for older children outdoors to support their physical skills.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY295050
Local authority	Reading
Inspection number	10228372
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	1 to 4
Total number of places	48
Number of children on roll	32
Name of registered person	Western Elms Nursery School Partnership
Registered person unique reference number	RP902035
Telephone number	0118 572146
Date of previous inspection	5 January 2017

Information about this early years setting

Western Elms Nursery first opened in 1962 and registered under the current ownership in 2004. The nursery operates from a large Victorian house in West Reading, Berkshire. It is open each weekday between 7.30am and 6.30pm, all year round. The nursery is in receipt of funding for the provision of free early education to children aged two, three and four years. There are 10 staff working with the children, eight of whom hold appropriate qualifications at level 3 or above. Two members of staff hold relevant degrees, one of whom also holds early years teacher status.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Sonia Panchal

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 nursery manager joined the inspector on a learning walk and talked to the inspector about their curriculum and what they want the children to learn.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation of a communication and language activity with a senior leader.
- The inspector observed the quality of the education being provided, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact that this was having on the children's learning.
- The inspector spoke to parents on the phone on the day of the inspection where they shared their feedback of the provision.
- Children spoke to the inspector during the inspection.
- The inspector talked to staff at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their views.
- 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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