

Inspection of High Bank Nursery

High Bank Farm, Cleasby Road, Stapleton, DARLINGTON, County Durham DL2 2QE

Inspection date: 27 May 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children thoroughly enjoy their time at this unique nursery based on a working farm. They are excited when they arrive and are warmly greeted by staff who know them well. Children are highly motivated and eager to explore the inviting and stimulating learning environment. Children's behaviour is exceptional. Staff are wonderfully caring role models and help children from a very young age to understand how their actions can affect other people. Children show high levels of self-regulation. They respond to the positive praise from staff and show great respect and care for each other.

Pre-school children are extremely confident and very independent. They help with daily routines and explore their learning with zeal. For example, during forest school activities, they throw themselves into what fascinates them and make links to prior learning. They recall pressing flowers as they plant sunflower seeds, and make observations about snail shells that they will investigate on the internet. Others make musical instruments out of a 'Y'-shaped stick and metal bottle tops. Later, without prompt, they name all the words they know beginning with 'Y', such as 'yoghurt' and 'you'. Younger children delight in the many sensory activities staff provide. They make marks in trays of rice and enthusiastically explore water play. Overall, this child-centred approach helps children gain valuable skills and attitudes needed for when they move to school.

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

- The owners have a continued commitment to the provision of high-quality care and learning for children. They are reflective and work hard to improve the setting. For example, to support pre-school children's learning, they added a new timber building to complement the all-weather polytunnel in the garden. Staff say this has improved children's concentration and learning.
- Although the setting has experienced several periods of staff sickness and changes to the staff team, parents praise the excellent communication from staff throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Parents are very positive in their comments.
- The quality of education for pre-school children has been maintained and is outstanding. The highly skilled staff extend children's learning exceptionally well in all activities and routines. However, at times, some staff working with the younger children do not recognise chances to extend their independence and build on their interest and abilities. This is particularly the case during busy mealtimes, where children sit and wait for too long.
- Overall, staff place a good focus on supporting children's communication and language skills. Many older children excel in their speaking, listening and attention, writing and early reading. However, the manager and staff recognise

the impact the pandemic has had on younger children's language development. As a result, they have developed ways to support them effectively. For example, children enjoy sing-and-sign sessions with a visiting teacher. Additionally, the owner has employed an external speech and language therapist who visits regularly to support children with minor speech difficulties.

- Children have exciting opportunities to learn about the world around them. Staff help children learn how to look after the environment and care for living things. Children help feed the goats and Frank the pig, and collect eggs from the resident chickens, to then use for baking.
- Staff support children's healthy development very well. All children have a good range of physical challenges and learning experiences available to them. For instance, they help plant and dig the vegetable plot in 'Garden Club'. They also climb and swing on apparatus in the nursery park.
- The manager plans and organises the curriculum effectively. Assessments of children's current stage of development are secure. Leaders and staff have an excellent commitment to inclusion. All children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good progress. Staff work closely with parents and all professionals involved in children's care. They manage additional funding and focus on effective personal plans to ensure all children achieve well.
- The owners thoughtfully consider staff's well-being. The manager completes regular supervision sessions and ensures staff have access to professional development opportunities, to enhance their skills. However, the monitoring of the practice of those staff working with the younger age range is not yet highly focused on developing the quality of staff engagement to outstanding levels.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and staff have a very good knowledge of how to protect children from harm. They understand the broader safeguarding issues and know who to contact to seek advice or raise concerns. Children play in a safe and secure environment. Staff constantly check the environment on a daily basis to make sure that it remains a safe place in which children can play and learn. Children learn how to manage risks themselves. For example, they know how to play with sticks safely and learn to recognise plants and toadstools that are poisonous. The owners ensure that all staff remain suitable to work with children.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- support those staff working with younger children to challenge them more and build on what they already know and can do, to promote excellent progress

- consider how to ensure the daily routines are organised more effectively for younger children, so that high-quality learning experiences are consistently maintained
- strengthen the manager's monitoring skills to coach and support staff, to continually improve practice to outstanding levels across the nursery.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY259723
Local authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	10243069
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	0 to 4
Total number of places	110
Number of children on roll	164
Name of registered person	Lesley & Alan Thompson Partnership
Registered person unique reference number	RP905376
Telephone number	01325 365885
Date of previous inspection	6 September 2016

Information about this early years setting

High Bank Nursery registered in 2003. The nursery employs 25 members of childcare staff. Of these, 17 hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 or above, including one with early years professional status. The nursery opens from Monday to Friday, all year round, except for bank holidays and a week at Christmas. Sessions are from 7.30am until 6pm. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector
Jan Harvey

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the setting 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 setting.
- We carried out this inspection as a result of a risk assessment, following information we received about the provider.
- The manager and the inspector completed a learning walk together of all areas of the nursery and discussed the early years curriculum, and the safety and suitability of the setting.
- The inspector observed the quality of education being provided, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact that this was having on children's learning. This included those children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The inspector and the manager carried out several joint observations together.
- The inspector spoke with the owner and manager about the leadership and management of the setting. The manager showed the inspector documentation to demonstrate the suitability of staff.
- The inspector spoke to children, parents and staff, along with reviewing digital feedback from parents, 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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