

Inspection of Ashton House Nursery

Church Road, Ashton Hayes, Chester CH3 8AB

Inspection date: 31 August 2022

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

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is outstanding

Children are exceptionally settled at this awe-inspiring and unique nursery. The incredible environment is an oasis of play, adventure and exploration. Children have adapted remarkably well following the COVID-19 pandemic. Staff fully understand children's individual needs and how to support their emotional well-being. Staff and children build wonderful relationships with each other.

All areas of the nursery are buzzing hives of activity. Everywhere you look, children are incredibly engaged and highly motivated in their learning. Babies babble with delight while making their own choices during their play. They develop their senses and become excited while making 'music' with pinecones and sticks. Toddlers enthuse while creating large-scale art outdoors using large brushes. They compare the sizes of the carrots that they harvest and focus intently while opening bean pods to count the beans. Older children develop their imaginations while enacting their favourite stories, roaring that, 'I'm a big monster'. They show pride while successfully climbing planks of wood. Children count their fingers to check that each finger is safely inside protective gloves before using saws and hammers.

Staff expertly promote children's physical development and their resilience. For example, babies build strong core muscles and learn to walk quickly. Toddlers learn how to ride bicycles on the challenging track. Older children show remarkable strength and skill while safely climbing trees. They concentrate deeply while hammering nails into wood and sawing sticks to make models of sunflowers.

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

- The leaders of this nursery are inspirational. Their extraordinary ambition to 'develop the whole child in mind, body and heart' so they can be the 'best possible version of themselves' is consistently embedded across the nursery. Every single person involved, including children, staff and parents, fully buy-in to the 'Ashton House Way'. This is what makes this exceptional nursery so special.
- All children, including those with funded places and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make excellent progress. Leaders have carefully designed an inspiring curriculum which progressively builds on the knowledge and skills that children already have, and what they need to learn next. Staff expertly follow children's interests to keep them highly engaged in all that they do. This means that children are exceptionally well prepared for their next stages in learning, including their eventual move to school.
- Huge consideration is given by staff to developing children's communication, language and thinking skills. Children learn sign language from the earliest age. Staff use highly effective questioning techniques to help children to think carefully and develop their vocabulary. For example, while talking about flowers,

children use and understand words, such as stalk, petals, seeds and nectar.

- Staff foster children's love and pleasure for reading tremendously well. Children access an abundance of quality books throughout the day. They relish in the sheer delight of sitting quietly and reading books on a blanket in the woodland.
- Children are exceedingly confident individuals with impeccable manners. They eagerly approach the inspectors with intrigue. Children are keen to show off their talents in literacy, while skilfully typing their names using keyboards. They tell the inspectors about the fire safety rules with astounding clarity.
- Care practices are exceptional. Children's independence is promoted from the very start, for example, babies feed themselves with spoons. Children hang their belongings up and persevere while fastening their shoes. They eat and serve themselves healthy, nutritious, home-cooked food. Children grow their own produce, such as apples, and are excited to harvest these when they are ready. Older children cook their teacakes and apples using sticks on the fire and comment on how the cinnamon bubbles 'because it is getting hot'.
- Children's learning about the world around them is phenomenal. They visit the nursery's animals and learn about them, while the pigs wallow in the mud. Children plant seeds and discover lifecycles. They learn about similarities and differences between themselves and others, such as by fundraising for charities. Children learn that differences should be celebrated and respected.
- Partnership working is excellent. Leaders create strong links with schools and staff work astoundingly well with external professionals and parents, so that children get the support that they need to truly thrive. In addition, the local community helped to develop the incredible outdoor environment.
- Parents commend the nursery for being 'a home-from-home' where their children 'thrive' and are nurtured to become 'strong in their own self-belief'. They praise staff for going 'above and beyond' and say that their children 'love and respect' them. Parents find the information that staff share 'invaluable'.
- Leaders' curriculum efforts are wholly matched with the exquisite programme of bespoke training and support for staff. This is tailored to staff's individual needs and helps them to achieve qualifications. Staff have special 'aspirations' to aim for which contribute to wider self-improvement work. They have exceptionally high levels of well-being and say that the nursery is 'so special'.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Exhaustive recruitment arrangements ensure that staff are suitable. Leaders deploy staff extremely well. Comprehensive risk assessments ensure that the premises are safe. Children are taught very effectively how to take carefully managed risks. Staff access training in safeguarding and first aid. Leaders check that this knowledge is to a consistently high standard. Staff have a great understanding of how to protect children and know the steps to take, should there be concerns about children's welfare or a colleague's conduct. Staff have a comprehensive knowledge of safeguarding issues, including cuckooing, and the 'Prevent' duty.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY365637
Local authority	Cheshire West and Chester
Inspection number	10129187
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 11
Total number of places	242
Number of children on roll	311
Name of registered person	Ashton House Nursery Limited
Registered person unique reference number	RP905596
Telephone number	01829 751353
Date of previous inspection	5 May 2016

Information about this early years setting

Ashton House Nursery registered in 2008. It is located in Ashton Hayes, Chester. The nursery employs 84 members of staff. Of these, 41 hold early years qualifications at level 3 and above. Four members of staff have early years professional status and two have qualified teacher status. The nursery opens Monday to Friday, all year round. Sessions are from 8am to 6pm. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors

David Lobodzinski
Rachel Waterhouse

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the nursery received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the provider and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the setting.
- The management team and the inspectors completed a learning walk to ascertain the aims and rationale for the early years curriculum.
- The inspectors observed the interactions between staff and children throughout the day and evaluated the impact on children's learning.
- Joint observations were carried out by the inspectors and the management team.
- The inspectors held discussions with the provider, the management team, staff and children at appropriate times during the inspection.
- The views of parents were taken into consideration by the inspectors, through written testimonials and discussions.
- Relevant documentation was reviewed by the inspectors, including evidence of the suitability and training of staff.

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.

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk

This publication is available at <https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2022