

Inspection of Saplings Nursery

Waltham Hall Cottage, Bambers Green, Takeley, Bishop's Stortford, Essex CM22
6PF

Inspection date: 6 September 2022

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

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children are happy to attend this nursery and display a positive attitude to learning. Children know the setting's established routines and form strong relationships with staff, who in turn support their emotional well-being, self-esteem and resilience. Children navigate with ease and confidence around the nursery, choosing activities that spark their curiosity and excitement. Babies explore a wide range of resources that promote their gross motor skills. They enjoy bouncing on small trampolines and learn to balance as they walk across beams with the help and support of staff.

Children display a great sense of discovery and exploration. For example, they excitedly dig in mud, using tools with good control, to look for bugs. Children then use their knowledge and past experience to talk to their peers and staff about the bugs they find.

Children across all age groups enjoy books and develop a passion for reading. They choose their favourite stories to listen to at circle time and maintain their concentration throughout. In addition, children enjoy singing familiar nursery rhymes, using props and actions. Staff support children's fine motor skills through fun and exciting activities with play dough. They encourage children to explore the play dough independently and teach new concepts, such as rolling, cutting and stretching.

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

- Children have access to a wide array of meaningful activities, organised in separate rooms. This includes a very well-equipped room for supervised physical activities, including a climbing wall. Children enjoy new experiences and good opportunities to develop their growing physical skills, such as balance and coordination.
- Children behave well and follow staff's instructions to stay safe. All children share and take turns with ease, showing good understanding of boundaries. Children are developing their independence. For example, they cut up their own food at lunchtime and pour their own drink with confidence.
- The key-person system is effective and implemented well across the nursery. For example, younger babies spend quality time with their key person when they arrive in the morning. This helps to strengthen their bond and settle with ease.
- Staff have good knowledge and understanding of children's learning. They understand what children need to learn next and use information from their observations of children to guide their planning. However, occasionally, staff do not identify when children need more challenge to extend their learning further.
- Children have good opportunities to learn about nature and the world around

them. They have access to a large outdoor space, including a vegetable patch, where they help to look after animals, such as chickens, guinea pigs and snails. Children are inquisitive and eagerly dig in the mud. They fill and empty buckets with sand and look for bugs in the forest school provision.

- Staff support the children to consolidate their prior knowledge and experience by encouraging them to remember what they already know, and they then build on this knowledge. Staff engage in meaningful conversations with the children about what happened the day before or earlier on in the day. However, at times, staff do not engage all children in challenging conversations, particularly the younger children, to develop their communication and language skills to a high level.
- Leaders have a strong vision for their nursery. They aim to be a benchmark within their community and to support other childcare providers. Leaders reflect continuously on their practice and always strive for better. They are inclusive and value their team's well-being and professional growth. Leaders organise regular meetings to nurture and mentor new team members, while including the whole team in developing an effective curriculum for the nursery.
- Partnership with parents is effective. Parents comment on how inclusive and supportive leaders and staff are. For example, parents praise how well staff support children's emotional well-being and how effective the overall communication is.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and staff have good knowledge and understanding of safeguarding, including wider aspects such as the 'Prevent' duty. There is a robust induction process in place to ensure all staff members complete regular and relevant training to keep the safeguarding knowledge current and up to date. Staff have deep knowledge and understanding on how to deal with disclosures and referrals to relevant professionals, to protect children from harm. Furthermore, staff carry out regular and thorough risk assessments to ensure the rooms and garden are safe. This helps to assure children's safety and welfare.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- strengthen the quality of teaching to provide further challenge that extends children's learning
- help staff to develop their knowledge of how to consistently support younger children's communication and language skills.

Setting details

Unique reference number	2563298
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10250235
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	1 to 4
Total number of places	82
Number of children on roll	79
Name of registered person	Davies, Linda Ann
Registered person unique reference number	RP512553
Telephone number	01279 851998
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

Saplings Nursery was established in 2007 and re-registered in 2019. It operates from premises located in Bampers Green, Takeley. Sessions are from 7.30am until 6.30pm, Monday to Friday, all year round. The nursery employs 29 staff, 24 of whom are childcare staff. Of these, 12 staff hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 or above. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Anca Sandu

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 provision.
- The provider and the inspector completed a learning walk together. They discussed how the curriculum is organised and what they want children to learn.
- The inspector observed the quality of teaching and education, outdoors and indoors, and assessed the impact this has on children's learning.
- The inspector spoke with the staff at appropriate times throughout the inspection.
- Children spoke with the inspector about the activities they were doing.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation with the pre-school room leader.
- The inspector held a meeting with the provider, manager and room leaders. She looked at relevant documentation and reviewed evidence of the suitability of the staff working at the nursery.
- Parents spoke about the nursery to the inspector, who 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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