

Inspection of Ladybugs & Slugs Forest School

Davenport Methodist Church, Holmes Chapel Road, Davenport, Congleton, Cheshire CW12 4SS

Inspection date: 1 November 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
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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 warmly welcomed in this delightful forest school nursery. Even very new children settle quickly in the calm and relaxed atmosphere. The nurturing staff know children very well and provides activities and resources that they know will entice and excite each child. For example, the staff provides dinosaurs in the mud pit and junk modelling with natural materials for free-art exploration. Children make independent choices from the resources available and show positive attitudes to learning. They display good manners and behaviours; any minor disagreements are managed well by staff. These respectful relationships help children to feel happy, safe and secure.

Children benefit from a stimulating and purposeful outdoor learning environment. They confidently clamber along logs, climb trees and play hide and seek under the close supervision of staff. Children show intense concentration and curiosity. For example, they lift up stones to investigate the lives of minibeasts and recall excitedly that they have a mouse that comes to visit them. Children practise their large-muscle skills when jumping off logs of varying heights. They use the rope swing, remembering to consider where their friends are playing before swinging. This helps them to develop an increased awareness of themselves and others.

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

- Children enjoy a broad curriculum that ensures they embed skills across all areas of learning. They thoroughly enjoy planting and growing vegetables and herbs, and later harvest these to cook on the open fire. This creates a wealth of learning opportunities about where our food comes from, healthy eating and life cycles.
- Children are becoming increasingly independent. They put on their own 'wellies', hang up their own coats, tidy their belongings and access resources themselves. Children also learn to manage their own personal needs. Staff remind them why they need to wash their hands. Children explain to their friends that they can eat their lunch now they have 'washed the germs away'. Children develop an awareness of the importance of good health and hygiene practices.
- The manager communicates her expectations for staff practice clearly. She teaches staff to use questioning techniques that provoke children's thinking. Staff interact well with children during their play. They encourage children to pronounce words correctly and add new words to extend their vocabulary. Staff provide a language-rich environment.
- Staff use every opportunity to incorporate mathematics into the daily routine. Children are supported to count down the seconds as they wash their hands, and add up how many raisins and apple slices they each have at snack time. Children confidently count the number of strides to the hut as they bound up the

path. Staff are encouraging and act as positive role models for the children.

- Staff teach children to be independent and resourceful in a fun and positive manner. For example, children are encouraged to peel their own fruit. Staff teach them useful methods, such as holding a banana upside down and squeezing it. The children's laughter fills the air as they eagerly try this technique for themselves. This helps to develop their self-confidence and problem-solving skills.
- Parents speak very highly about the forest school and its ethos. They praise the support that their children receive. Parents feel fully informed about their children's learning and comment positively on the progress they have made. They speak highly of the 'knowledgeable and supportive' staff team and value the regular feedback they receive. However, opportunities to network with other settings and external professionals have not yet been prioritised in order to share information and provide greater continuity in children's care and learning.
- Staff feel incredibly well supported and 'empowered' by the manager and the forest school ethos. The manager works alongside her team, giving daily feedback on their practice. The manager implements a programme of training and support that helps to develop the practice and knowledge of staff. However, this is not always precisely targeted for each individual member of staff, in order to raise the quality of teaching to the highest level.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff demonstrate a good understanding of how to safeguard children. They understand their roles and responsibilities and know what may indicate a child is at risk of harm. Staff are confident in the procedures to follow in the event of a concern. The manager follows stringent recruitment procedures to make sure that staff are suitable to work with children. Staff support children to identify and manage risks in their play. For example, they talk to them about balancing carefully on the slippery logs, and to watch out for the prickly brambles. Risk assessments are thorough, and staff are vigilant when checking that the environment is a safe and secure space for children to play.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- establish links with external professionals and other settings that children also attend to share information and to promote continuity in children's care and learning
- sharpen professional development and support staff precisely in raising the quality of teaching to the highest level.

Setting details

Unique reference number	2590608
Local authority	Cheshire East
Inspection number	10251224
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	2 to 4
Total number of places	48
Number of children on roll	19
Name of registered person	Ladybugs and Slugs Forest School Ltd
Registered person unique reference number	2590606
Telephone number	07544177444
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

Ladybugs & Slugs Forest School registered in 2020. It operates from the gardens of Davenport Methodist Church in Congleton, Cheshire. The forest school opens from Monday to Thursday, all year round. Sessions are between 8.30am and 5pm, with the exception of bank holidays and the Christmas break. The forest school provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Marianne McDowell

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 inspector and the manager completed a learning walk together across all areas of the setting and discussed the early years curriculum.
- The inspector observed the quality of education being provided, and assessed the impact on children's learning and development.
- The inspector held discussions with staff, children and parents at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation of a communication and language activity with the manager and discussed the impact of teaching on children's learning.
- The inspector looked at a sample of relevant records and documentation, including evidence of staff suitability and training.

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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