

Inspection of Small Wonders Day Nursery

Small Wonders, 57 Hullbridge Road, South Woodham Ferrers, CHELMSFORD CM3 5NH

Inspection date: 15 February 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
------------------------------	-------------

The quality of education	Good
--------------------------	-------------

Behaviour and attitudes	Good
-------------------------	-------------

Personal development	Good
----------------------	-------------

Leadership and management	Good
---------------------------	-------------

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good
--	------

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

There is a robust key-person approach that contributes to the strong attachments between staff and their key children throughout the nursery. This helps all children feel safe and secure. Children learn to love books, and there is a strong focus on fostering their communication skills. Babies name familiar objects in stories. They sign along to rhymes and gesture 'please' and 'thank you' at mealtimes. This boosts their ability to express their needs. Toddlers eagerly anticipate 'what's in the bag', and watch excitedly as a member of staff pulls out one of their favourite books. They readily join in with repetitive phrases. Staff engage older children's curiosity when they demonstrate how to research. For example, they find a picture of an insect and read out the relevant information. Children enthusiastically search for the first letter of their name on a keyboard. Staff build on their literacy skills by gently encouraging them to think of other words that start with the same sound.

Children spend a lot of time outdoors and benefit from fresh air and exercise. Older children move freely between the indoors and outdoors to make a choice about where they wish to play. Children carefully balance, as they navigate a structure of crates and planks in the garden. Staff reassure them, saying, 'you can do it, I'm here if you need help'. Children confidently persevere and smile proudly at their achievements.

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

- The manager and deputy manager work closely together and lead a stable, committed team. Staff meet regularly with the management to discuss their workload and professional development. They are empowered to make changes to meet children's needs. As a result, the baby room has become more homely. Staff have organised snack times in the pre-school to build on the key-person relationships and promote more meaningful conversations.
- The manager is very reflective. She has made changes that have had a positive impact on children's well-being. For example, after the COVID-19 pandemic, she extended the settling-in process to give parents and children more time to get to know staff. Following training, staff have seen positive changes in children's behaviour since introducing children's yoga.
- There is a clear curriculum that supports children to progressively gain the essential skills they need to move through the nursery or go to school. For example, babies use their whole bodies to draw with crayons. Toddlers throw beanbags into a basket, and paint on vertical surfaces to support their upper body development. Older children manipulate dough with a range of utensils, to help foster their fine motor skills. These activities enable children to gradually build the muscles they need to eventually become competent writers.
- Staff regularly assess their key children's progress. They use their good

knowledge of the children to plan activities to close any gaps in their development. Staff swiftly identify the specific needs of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. They work closely with other professionals to implement suitable strategies. Parents and staff are involved in making decisions about the best use of additional funding.

- Babies investigate different fabrics, smells and textures. Older children compare the qualities of flour to snow, and remember that 'snow melts'. However, in the toddler room, staff do not always consider young children's natural urge to test things out for themselves. Although toddlers have lots of fun making different sounds with instruments and tasting toothpaste, staff occasionally try and distract them from doing things their own way.
- Children learn about the local community. They go out on visits to the park and library. Staff recognise that some parents may currently benefit from information about local low-cost activities, clothes swaps and children's centre sessions. Although the manager has built an effective network with other providers, they do not consistently liaise with other early years settings children attend to ensure a coherent approach to their care and development.
- Parents say their children have made 'amazing progress' and that the nursery gives their children experiences they wouldn't have at home. They appreciate the consistent staff team. The manager acts on parents' feedback. For example, in response to requests, parents view a daily slideshow showing their babies engaged in activities during the day.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The manager implements an effective recruitment process that contributes to recruiting safely. She regularly assesses staff's ongoing suitability. The manager keeps her safeguarding knowledge up to date through attendance at local authority meetings and briefings. Staff attend regular training. They are able to identify children who may be more vulnerable. Staff are confident of the actions to take in response to any safeguarding concerns. They monitor attendances and accidents to be aware of emerging patterns that may indicate a child is at risk. An electronic entry system prevents unauthorised persons entering this secure nursery.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- support staff's knowledge of how to enable young children to use resources in their own way to build on their own ideas and way of doing things
- strengthen partnerships with other professionals who also care for the children to support even greater consistency of care and learning.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY451561
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10276630
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	0 to 10
Total number of places	55
Number of children on roll	92
Name of registered person	Small Wonders Day Nurseries Ltd
Registered person unique reference number	RP910814
Telephone number	01245426724
Date of previous inspection	25 July 2017

Information about this early years setting

Small Wonders Day Nursery registered in 2012 and is one of two settings owned by the same provider. The nursery is open from Monday to Friday, all year round, from 7am until 7pm. The nursery employs 18 members of staff to work directly with children. There are 13 members of staff who hold an appropriate early years qualification at level 2 or above. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Fiona Sapler

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the nursery 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.
- The deputy manager, manager and inspector completed a learning walk together of all areas of the nursery and discussed the early years curriculum.
- The inspector talked to staff at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The inspector observed the quality of education being provided, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact that this was having on children's learning.
- The manager, the deputy manager and the inspector carried out joint observations and evaluated these together.
- The inspector spoke to parents during the inspection.
- The manager showed the inspector documentation to demonstrate the suitability 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 2023