

Inspection of Western Elms Nursery

59 Western Elms Avenue, READING, Berkshire RG30 2AL

Inspection date: 21 February 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement
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What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children are happy and secure at this welcoming, home-from-home nursery. They have very strong relationships with staff, who spend time getting to know them well. Children benefit from stimulating play spaces and eagerly explore the enticing learning experiences alongside their friends. For example, babies enjoy messy play activities and show high levels of curiosity as they hunt for hidden objects. They clap and splash with foam and laugh and giggle as they watch it float through the air. Toddlers look for bugs in the garden. They peer through magnifying glasses with anticipation and excitedly discuss what they see.

Staff focus on children's independence skills from a young age. Older children learn how to use tools safely and independently cut up fruit for their snack. They naturally pour their own drinks and demonstrate good hand-eye coordination. Children in the pre-school room discover more about the food they enjoy as they make their own pancakes together.

Children behave well. They willingly share resources and are kind and respectful towards each other. Staff promote a culture of helping children to understand how to self-regulate their emotions. Should a small dispute occur, staff sensitively talk to children and give them strategies that help them to overcome their feelings. They offer children lots of cuddles and reassurance when needed, which helps them to feel safe and secure.

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

- The management team is passionate about ensuring that staff are empowered to take responsibility for their key roles. Since the last inspection, management have developed a clear plan for professional development, training and support. Staff morale is high. They say they feel listened to and supported by the managers.
- Staff regularly assess children and plan a well-organised curriculum that builds on children's ongoing learning. The special educational needs coordinator works closely with staff and other professionals to ensure that any gaps in children's development are closed swiftly. All children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language, make good progress from their starting points.
- All children have plenty of opportunities to practise their literacy skills. For example, babies roll balls through paint and use their fingers to explore different textures. Toddlers are keen to experiment with different mark-making tools. Pre-school children confidently act out different roles, pretending to be a doctor, for example. They are imaginative and write out prescriptions for their patients.
- Children of all ages delight in fresh air and physical exercise throughout the day.

Older children confidently balance across beams and learn to take safe risks on climbing equipment. Babies build on their core strength as they move backwards and forwards on the seesaw.

- Staff support children to develop their understanding of language. For example, they encourage children to describe textures and to recall the ingredients they used for making dough. However, at times, in their enthusiasm, staff working with older children are a little directive. They do not consistently give children time to problem solve and express their own ideas, to take children's learning to the highest level.
- Staff embed children's backgrounds and ways of life into the setting. This means that children instantly feel welcomed and valued. For example, children make flags and discuss the different countries from which they originate.
- Parents speak positively about the nurturing staff team. They say staff genuinely care about their children and work closely alongside them to ensure continuity in their child's care and well-being. Staff use a variety of methods to keep parents informed of children's progress. However, they do not offer all parents ideas and suggestions about how they can continue to support their children's learning at home. This will promote a more united approach to helping children progress in their development.
- Staff skilfully engage children in conversation about healthy eating during activities such as pretend play. This helps to develop children's understanding of ways to keep themselves well. Parents report that, since starting at the setting, their children are eating a wider variety of healthy food at home.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff complete a broad range of child protection training and have strong knowledge of safeguarding. They understand the procedures they need to follow to protect children's welfare and know how to record any concerns accurately. Staff uphold the highest standards of health and hygiene practice. They can talk about various risk assessments they have in place across the provision. The management team completes robust recruitment and induction arrangements to ensure that staff are, and remain, suitable for their role.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- support older children to develop their thinking and problem-solving skills to the highest level
- build on relationships with parents even further to offer them ideas and suggestions on how they can promote their children's learning at home.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY295050
Local authority	Reading
Inspection number	10244356
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	1 to 4
Total number of places	48
Number of children on roll	39
Name of registered person	Western Elms Nursery School Partnership
Registered person unique reference number	RP902035
Telephone number	0118 572146
Date of previous inspection	8 April 2022

Information about this early years setting

Western Elms Nursery first opened in 1962 and registered under the current ownership in 2004. The nursery operates from a large Victorian house in West Reading, Berkshire. It is open each weekday, between 7.30am and 6.30pm, all year round. The nursery is in receipt of funding for the provision of free early education to children aged two, three and four years. There are 12 staff working with the children, nine of whom hold appropriate qualifications at level 3 or above. One member of staff holds a relevant level 6 degree.

Information about this inspection

Inspector
Jane Franks

Inspection activities

- The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the manager and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the setting.
- The manager took the inspector on a learning walk to discuss the early years curriculum.
- The manager conducted a joint observation with the inspector in the pre-school room.
- The inspector spoke with parents and children during the inspection and took into account their verbal and written views.
- The inspector conducted professional discussions with the manager, deputy manager and staff at convenient times during the inspection.
- A sample of documentation was observed.

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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