

Inspection of Letterbox Nursery

Letter Box Day Nursery, 99 High Street, WALTON ON THE NAZE, Essex CO14 8BA

Inspection date: 24 April 2023

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

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is outstanding

Children thrive in this exceptionally friendly and inclusive nursery. The provider, manager and staff have an exceedingly strong and caring ethos that puts children at the centre of everything they do. Children and their families are warmly welcomed at the door by their key person. Staff say 'hello' to children in their home language. They are highly attentive to children's individual needs and get to know children, and their families, very well. Children show that they feel extremely happy, settled and secure in the nursery. They demonstrate their confidence, resilience and independence as they persevere with challenging tasks. For example, children show great determination to do up the zips on their coats, and they are very proud when they eventually succeed.

Children enjoy a wealth of innovative and inspiring learning experiences. They go for walks on the beach and have great fun at the swimming pool. Children choose books from the library bus and join their friends on a coach trip to see a pantomime. They discover the awe and wonder of the world as they watch in amazement as the ducklings hatch out of their eggs. Children have superb opportunities to meet other people in the community, such as people who help them. Staff arrange visits from local fire and police officers. Children learn about their roles and the number to call for help. They have great fun trying on the police officer's hat and sitting in the police car, turning on the lights and siren. Children eagerly join in all activities. Staff ensure that all children have a highly enjoyable nursery experience and the best possible start to their early education.

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

- The provider, manager and staff are exceptionally dedicated and enthusiastic. Staff recognise the different experiences that children bring with them when they start attending the nursery. They skilfully develop children's knowledge and skills from their different starting points. Staff superbly enhance the opportunities available to children, particularly the most disadvantaged.
- Staff use their knowledge of children's abilities and interests to plan an exceptionally well sequenced and stimulating curriculum. They meticulously track children's progress, which enables them to identify and address any gaps in their learning. Staff provide extra support and opportunities for children to practise their newly acquired skills.
- Children learn an outstanding range of skills that will help to prepare them for their next stages in learning and their move to school. They learn about letters and sounds in an enjoyable way and practise writing their name. Staff's high-quality interactions build on children's speech and language, helping them to become very effective communicators. Children listen attentively and spontaneously join in with songs and rhymes. They use their developing

mathematical skills during activities, such as measuring the ingredients when making play dough.

- The support for all children, including children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, is highly effective. The manager, who is also the special educational needs and disabilities coordinator, is extremely conscientious in seeking appropriate early interventions. Staff work closely with other professionals to help all children to achieve their full potential. The manager closely monitors children in receipt of additional funding. She carefully considers how funding can benefit children in the most effective way. For example, children who do not have gardens thoroughly enjoy playing with the ride-on toys in the nursery garden.
- Children's behaviour is exceptional. They learn to manage their feelings and treat each other with kindness and respect. Children share their ideas and quickly resolve conflicts as they play cooperatively together. For example, as they create structures with the bricks, one child wants to make a 'scary village' and another wants to make a 'zoo'. They compromise by making a 'scary zoo'.
- Staff value the important role that parents play in supporting children's development and involve them fully in their children's learning. They provide delightful activity bags that provide parents with ideas on how to support their children's learning at home. Parents are extremely complimentary about the staff and the exceptional progress their children make.
- The manager highly values the staff team and demonstrates excellent leadership skills. Her regular supervision and monitoring of staff practice help to ensure consistently outstanding practice across the nursery. Staff are encouraged to enhance their already excellent teaching skills continually. They attend a wealth of training events, including how to help children be ready for their move on to school. Staff say that the manager is 'fantastic' and very supportive and that they thoroughly enjoy working at the nursery.
- The provider and the manager demonstrate a passion and commitment to providing children with the very best early years experiences. They are extremely reflective and use feedback from children, parents and staff to make improvements. The manager is very proud of the strong staff team she has developed. She strives to offer the highest possible standards for all children attending the nursery.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The manager, who is also the designated safeguarding lead, has a very secure knowledge of safeguarding children. She ensures that all staff undertake regular training, so their knowledge remains up to date. Staff confidently describe the procedures to follow if they are concerned about a child in their care or an adult working with them. There are exceptionally robust arrangements for the recruitment and induction of new staff, ensuring all adults are suitable to work with children. Visitors are asked to read important information regarding safeguarding, first aid and fire drills to ensure everyone remains safe in the nursery.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY369169
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10280134
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	40
Number of children on roll	53
Name of registered person	Elm Barns Ltd
Registered person unique reference number	RP909663
Telephone number	01255 851400
Date of previous inspection	11 September 2017

Information about this early years setting

Letterbox Nursery registered in 2008. The nursery employs eight members of childcare staff. Of these, seven hold an appropriate early years qualification at level 2 and above. The nursery opens Monday to Friday, during school term time. Sessions are from 8.30am until 5.30pm. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Jacqui Oliver

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 manager and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the nursery.
- The manager showed the inspector around the areas that children access. They discussed how staff organise the setting and plan the curriculum and experiences for children.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation with the nursery manager.
- The inspector held discussions with staff, children and parents at appropriate times during the inspection.
- The inspector looked at a sample of the nursery's documents. This included evidence about 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.

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