

Inspection of Little Darwins Nursery

Rettendon School, Main Road, Rettendon Common, CHELMSFORD CM3 8DW

Inspection date:

27 July 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

Outstanding

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is outstanding

Children are extremely enthusiastic and happy on arrival to the setting. They clearly feel safe, having formed strong, secure attachments to their key person. Children place their belongings on named pegs and excitedly run to find their friends. They have a strong desire to learn, seeking out new experiences. Staff model language exceptionally well. Children listen and respond to instructions and initiate conversations with others.

Children access outstanding learning opportunities in the well-designed indoor and outdoor environments. They are fully engaged in high-quality learning experiences planned through a well-sequenced curriculum. Children decide where to play and actively seek out activities of their own choosing. They use child-sized rakes to gather and move bark using their gross motor skills. They skilfully make sandcastles in the sand and use a water pump in the garden. They master a challenging obstacle course, using their hand-to-eye coordination and physical skills.

Children's behaviour is exemplary. The staff team promotes positive behaviour and teaches the children respect and tolerance. Older children have developed friendships with peers, and they enjoy playing together. Babies sit on mats, curiously turning pages in books. They are confident to explore and play independently, as they know that an adult is close by.

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

- Managers lead a highly qualified and motivated team in implementing an ambitious curriculum. Children are independent and confident learners who are fully immersed in their play. They take part in team running events on the playground, cheering on their friends and waiting patiently for their turn. They enjoy themes, such as marine life, where they explore toy sea creatures in water or gloop. Children name orb and diamond shapes they find buried in oats.
- Routines support children to have structure to their day. They help to tidy away and know where items belong. Children talk to the cook over the kitchen gate and use their sense of smell to guess what lunch might be. Children wash their hands before mealtimes and manage personal hygiene extremely well. They learn about healthy food choices and enjoy tasting new foods. Children manage their behaviour extremely well. They can self-regulate their behaviour and talk about emotions.
- Teaching is outstanding. Children learn phonics and match them to words, eventually learning their own names. They make marks on paper and can write their names before going to school. Children have a love of books and enjoy listening to favourite rhymes and stories. They copy actions, using their fine and

gross motor skills, and sing along having learned the words.

- Transitions within the nursery and beyond are exceptionally well organised. Parents come into the setting to settle their children in. Sessions are flexible to meet the needs of children and families. Staff support children as they move through the setting, using a highly successful key-person approach. Local schools visit and meet children in the setting before they move to school.
- Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities make clear and consistent progress in their learning and development. Staff have very high expectations of the children. They work with external agencies and families to create individual learning plans for children. Children have access to high-quality learning experiences, which supports them to achieve the next steps in their learning.
- Parents speak very highly about the setting. They have confidence in the staff team and feel included as part of the setting. Additionally, they explain how managers and staff actively support them with home learning. Parents have daily discussions with staff and receive communication through an app. They are invited into the nursery for parents' evenings and to celebrate special events. Parents help with charity fundraising events at the setting. They appreciate how monies raised are spent on improving the facilities for the children.
- Managers hold regular supervision meetings with staff. A high emphasis is placed on staff well-being and training. Managers invest in individual and team training opportunities. Staff are undertaking specific training to strengthen teaching approaches across the setting. This has a positive impact on children's overall development.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are expertly trained and knowledgeable about how to protect children from harm. They can identify the signs that may indicate a child is at risk of harm. Furthermore, they know the steps to follow to report any concerns about a child's welfare. Managers ensure that staff safety checks are complete, and they have robust monitoring systems in place. Staff promote inclusion and equality and will challenge discrimination immediately. They understand safeguarding issues, such as the 'Prevent' duty, and their safeguarding knowledge is secure. Risk assessments and accident monitoring processes are in place to ensure the setting is secure and children are safe.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY416623
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10295237
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 11
Total number of places	85
Number of children on roll	142
Name of registered person	The Rettendon Community Academy Community Interest Company
Registered person unique reference number	RP530119
Telephone number	01268 769599
Date of previous inspection	19 December 2017

Information about this early years setting

Little Darwins Nursery registered in 2011. The nursery employs 27 staff to work directly with the children, including the manager. Of these, 18 hold relevant qualifications between level 2 and level 6. Additionally, the nursery employs two administrative staff and two chefs. The nursery opens from Monday to Friday, all year round, with the exception of one week at Christmas and public holidays. Sessions are from 7am until 7pm. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Linda Cranny

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 completed a learning walk with the manager and discussed the intent of the curriculum and the organisation of the setting.
- The manager and inspector carried out a joint observation of an activity.
- The inspector spent time in all rooms observing the quality of education and teaching.
- The inspector talked to staff and children.
- Parents spoke to the inspector about the setting.
- The inspector viewed documentation, including evidence of the suitability of staff.
- The inspector held a meeting with the management team.

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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