

Inspection of Hertford Barns Day Nursery

Munns Farm, Cole Green, HERTFORD SG14 2NL

Inspection date: 30 November 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	Not applicable

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is outstanding

Staff place children's needs at the centre of everything they do. Children demonstrate exceptional confidence, curiosity, and keenness to learn. The nurturing staff team plan and deliver a broad range of exciting and challenging experiences, which supports the children to thrive during their time at the nursery. Staff skilfully plan and implement a wide range of activities that build on children's development throughout their time at the nursery. They ensure that children's learning is meticulously sequenced. From the very youngest age, babies competently use their hands and fingers to mould and manipulate dough. Toddlers excitedly use toy hammers to free the toy dinosaurs from the ice. The oldest children thoroughly enjoy participating in woodwork activities. They concentrate as they carefully hold nails and hammer bottle tops onto a plank of wood. These activities successfully help children to develop strength and control in their hands and wrists, which are essential for when they learn to write.

Children develop a strong sense of belonging. Staff are exceptionally skilled at supporting children to learn to manage and understand their emotions. The extensive settling-in process successfully supports the children to feel safe, secure and comfortable. Staff know their key children extremely well and are tuned into their individual needs. The close relationships between staff and children helps enable children to persevere when they find tasks difficult. In turn, children feel a sense of pride in their accomplishments.

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

- The dedicated manager works tirelessly to motivate the nursery team to ensure that children have the positive experience they deserve in their early years. The leadership team supports staff well-being to the highest level. Staff report that they are proud to work at the nursery and feel their work is valued. As a result, they are committed to giving children high-quality care and education.
- The manager and staff have extensive knowledge of the curriculum and how children learn. They know the value of planning a smooth and coherent curriculum for children's learning. Training they undertake is specific and targeted to benefit the children in their care. Staff also offer training to parents. This shared approach successfully enhances the children's care and education.
- Staff give the highest priority to developing children's communication and language skills. Staff listen to children and enrich their experiences by introducing new vocabulary and repeating words. Babies repeat the word 'pop' as they play with bubbles. Staff use actions, which is very effective in supporting children to understand the meaning of words. For example, older children learn about 'force' as the nails bend when they hammer them too hard. Staff skilfully sign words as they speak to children. They get down to their level, and listen

and value their response. This expands the language skills of all children, including those who are less verbal.

- Staff expertly support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Together with parents, they formulate and review detailed plans. This results in children receiving swift support from other professionals. Staff work diligently to ensure that this group of children make the best possible progress from their starting points.
- Children become highly independent from a young age. For example, babies instinctively crawl into their own beds when they are ready to sleep. Toddlers successfully serve themselves food at lunchtimes using tongs and spoons. Older children competently make choices about their time at nursery and complete tasks to their satisfaction.
- Staff actively encourage children to care about the natural world. They use children's interests to enhance their learning and engage in interesting conversations. For example, the manager arranged for children to care for lambs until they were sheep. Staff and children researched information about the lambs' needs together. Additionally, at mealtimes, staff show children whole vegetables that have been cooked in their meals and talk to them about the vegetables. This is very effective in supporting the children to gain an understanding of growth and cycles in the natural world.
- Staff very skilfully help children to recall their learning. Children listen to staff and confidently talk about how they tested what would make a good roof for their bugs. Staff ask questions that allow children to have ideas and solve problems through play. For example, the children learned that straw and leaves did not keep the water away from the bugs and in the end, decided to move the bugs away from the water completely.
- Parents are overwhelmingly complimentary about the nursery. They speak very highly of the relationships that staff build with their children. They receive frequent updates in a variety of ways to understand their child's development and how to help them further. For example, updates on the online journal, daily verbal feedback from staff and ideas to use at home are written on the doors when entering the playrooms.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The manager and staff have extensive safeguarding knowledge and frequently refresh their skills. For example, they are knowledgeable about the latest local area needs and work closely with other professionals. Staff know what might indicate reasons for concerns and understand the process to report any concerns should they spot the signs. Additionally, the designated officers for safeguarding determinedly strive to work and challenge the actions of other professionals to ensure that children and families receive service they deserve. This helps promote the well-being of the children and their families.

Setting details

Unique reference number	2642304
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10295747
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	0 to 4
Total number of places	86
Number of children on roll	114
Name of registered person	Childbase Partnership Limited
Registered person unique reference number	RP900830
Telephone number	01707 392999
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

Hertford Barns registered in June 2021. It employs 39 staff. Of these, four staff hold a level 6 qualification, including one who holds qualified teacher status, and 21 hold qualifications at level 2 or above. The nursery opens Monday to Friday, all year round, except for Christmas and bank holidays. Sessions are from 7.30am to 6.30pm. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Elke Rockey

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection received since the COVID-19 pandemic. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the manager and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the inspection.
- The manager and room leaders joined the inspector on a learning walk and talked to the inspector about their curriculum and what they want the children to learn.
- 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 and the inspector carried out a joint observation of a spontaneous activity.
- The inspector spoke to several parents during the inspection, and read several testimonies written by parents, and considered their views.
- The inspector looked at relevant documentation and reviewed evidence of the suitability of staff working in the nursery.
- Children talked with the inspector during the inspection.

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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