

Inspection of Great and Small Forest School

Cottams Farm, Whalley Road, Clayton Le Moors, Accrington BB5 5SB

Inspection date: 18 September 2024

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
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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

The provider puts children at the centre of everything they do at this exceptional outdoor setting. All staff have a superb understanding of what the provider wants children to learn. The ambitious and rich curriculum sets clear learning intentions for what they want children to achieve. This is carefully planned and sequenced to build on what children already know, to extend and challenge their learning to the highest level. All children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), make superb progress from their starting points.

Staff support children to be inquisitive, curious and highly motivated learners. Children show immense curiosity, ask lots of questions and are excited to learn new things. They explore their natural environment and search for signs of animals. They become absorbed in a deer hoof print. Staff intensify younger children's fascination by giving clear narration about the size and shape of the hoof print. In addition, they encourage younger children to compare their own feet with the hoof print as they take a closer look and talk about the differences. Older children explain that the direction of the hoof print is a sign that the deer was going 'north'. Children applying previously learned facts in different contexts demonstrates excellent teaching strategies.

Staff have clear behavioural expectations of the children. They provide gentle guidance to support children to understand and regulate their emotions and behaviour. Children share resources with their friends, negotiate activities together and problem-solve to work things out. Younger children splash in delight in the stream as they attempt to collect water in pans. Older children offer support as the younger children attempt to carry the pans back up a small hill. As a result, children behave impeccably and are developing the skills they need for their next stage of learning, including school.

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

- Children are immersed in a language-rich environment. Staff expertly use stories, songs and games to promote children's language. Children use a wide range of vocabulary in their play. For example, older children use words such as 'invasive' and 'edible' as they explain what they have found while 'foraging'. Younger children add twigs to their paint and describe it as 'scratchy' and 'rough'. All children are becoming competent communicators.
- Opportunities for physical play are immense across the spacious site. Children show high levels of stamina and strength as they run, climb and balance. Staff promote children's good health. They offer healthy snacks and remind children to drink plenty of water to 'rehydrate'.
- Staff minimise hazards at the site effectively. They undertake thorough risk

assessments and have ongoing conversations with children about safety. Older children remind younger children not to touch stinging nettles and point out mushrooms that are not edible. Children expertly undertake their own risk assessments. They use gloves when using tools and tell each other to 'be careful' and 'hold hands'. As a result, children demonstrate a clear awareness of how to keep themselves safe.

- Partnerships with parents are superb. They are kept fully informed of their children's progress through detailed daily handovers. Parents comment that the setting is an extension to their family and are safe in the knowledge their children are learning and cared for in such a unique environment.
- Children experience a wide range of opportunities to support their understanding of, and respect for, the world around them. Different cultures and faiths are embraced in this setting. Children learn about local history and visitors, such as parents, are welcomed to teach the children about their culture, faith or their work.
- Staff's well-being is extremely important to the provider. She takes time to learn about each member of staff and tailor their support, mentoring and monitoring of practice accordingly. This approach has a positive impact on the team and all staff report feeling supported, valued and appreciated. Staff feel that communication across the forest school is highly effective, and they work as one big family to ensure the children receive the best possible care and education.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts children's interests first.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY554007
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10350861
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	3 to 10
Total number of places	14
Number of children on roll	14
Name of registered person	Great And Small Forest Education Limited
Registered person unique reference number	RP554006
Telephone number	07890538088
Date of previous inspection	6 September 2018

Information about this early years setting

Great and Small Forest School registered in 2017 and is situated in Clayton Le Moors, Lancashire. The provision operates term time only, with sessions between 9.00am and 3.00pm, on Tuesday and Wednesday. There are three members of staff; of these, one holds qualified teacher status, one holds a relevant level 3 early years qualification, and one holds the level 3 forest school qualification. The forest school provides funded early education for three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Kelly Little

Inspection activities

- The manager and inspector completed a learning walk together of all areas of the forest school and discussed the early years curriculum.
- Children spoke to/communicated with the inspector during the inspection.
- The inspector talked to staff at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The inspector carried out joint observations of group activities with the manager.
- The inspector looked at relevant documentation and reviewed evidence of the suitability of staff working in the nursery.
- The inspector viewed written testimonials from parents during the inspection and took account of their opinions.

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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