

Inspection of Holwell Nursery School

Crouch Lane, Holwell, Sherborne, Dorset DT9 5LP

Inspection date: 13 September 2024

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	Good
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What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children and their families receive a warm welcome into this nurturing and caring nursery. Children arrive happy and quickly engage in motivating and challenging activities that staff organise for them. Older children rush in, independently put their coats on their pegs, greet staff and start playing with their friends. New children receive nurturing and sensitive support from their key person to help them settle into nursery. Staff build strong relationships with children and parents. They work with parents to gather information about children's individual needs. This enables staff to support children to make good progress from the outset.

Staff have high expectations for children's behaviour. They take time to embed the routines and boundaries in each room. This helps children to feel safe and secure. Staff interact positively with children and adapt quickly to their interests. For example, older children make snails with play dough. Staff extend this learning by taking children outside to forage for snails and other creatures. Children show joy and curiosity as they look for snails in the mud. These thoughtful moments help children to develop a love of learning and extend their focus and concentration.

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

- The provider develops an ambitious and well-sequenced curriculum for children. Staff have a secure understanding of what they want children to learn and achieve. There is a clear focus on developing children's language, social, emotional and physical skills. For example, staff prioritise babies' emotional development to help them form close, strong attachments to their key person. Younger children practise their physical skills, such as pedalling on bikes, and pre-school children develop their listening skills through small-group activities organised by staff.
- Relationships between staff and parents are warm and supportive. Parents are positive about the 'family environment' staff create. They feel included in all aspects of their children's care and education. They receive regular updates about what children are learning when they drop off and collect their children, and through an app the nursery uses.
- Staff interactions with children are positive and encouraging. Staff consistently engage in children's play and skilfully introduce children to new vocabulary through the stimulating experiences they provide for children. For instance, staff carefully explain the differences between snails and slugs and answer children's questions about bugs they find. However, staff do not always provide children with enough time to talk and practise this new vocabulary to fully enhance children's communication skills.
- Effective planning and assessment mean that staff have a good understanding of children's interests, strengths and needs. Staff identify any gaps in learning

swiftly and put individual support in place. This means all children are continually moving forward in their learning.

- Staff encourage children to make choices and decisions about what they eat, drink, and play with. For example, children are encouraged to make healthy choices from their lunch boxes. Younger children pour their own drinks and use cutlery to feed themselves. However, the curriculum for developing independence for older children is not as strong. For example, staff provide resources and complete tasks for children without encouraging them to take responsibility for themselves to help prepare them for school.
- The provider has high expectations of staff and are keen to support their well-being. The staff supervision process is robust to ensure staff receive regular guidance and training to further develop their practice. For instance, staff recently received safe sleeping training. Following this, staff have embedded and follow a thorough process for monitoring babies and children as they sleep.
- Children show a positive attitude to learning and their behaviour is good. For example, they listen and follow staff's instructions to line up at the end of outside play. They form a line quickly and happily choose to sing nursery rhymes as they follow staff back into the setting.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- support staff to give children the time they need to share their ideas and to practise using new vocabulary to develop children's communication skills further
- help older children to develop their independence skills further by offering more opportunities for them to complete tasks for themselves.

Setting details

Unique reference number	139383
Local authority	Dorset
Inspection number	10351318
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	0 to 3
Total number of places	46
Number of children on roll	32
Name of registered person	Holwell Nursery School Committee
Registered person unique reference number	RP907709
Telephone number	01963 23368
Date of previous inspection	24 October 2018

Information about this early years setting

Holwell Nursery School registered in 1993. The nursery is situated in the village of Holwell, near Sherborne, Dorset. There are 10 staff who work with the children, including the manager. The manager and one other member of staff are qualified to level 5. Six members of staff hold a level 3 qualification, one has a level 2 qualification, and one member of staff is unqualified. The setting offers government funded places. The nursery opens from Monday to Thursday from 8am to 5.30pm and on Friday from 8am to 4.30pm, all year round.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Mikaela Jauncey

Inspection activities

- The inspector viewed the provision and discussed the safety and suitability of the premises with the manager.
- The manager joined the inspector on a learning walk and talked to the inspector about her curriculum and what she wants children to learn.
- The inspector held discussions with the manager throughout the inspection and discussed how the curriculum is planned and implemented and how children's progress is monitored.
- Staff talked to the inspector about their key children.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation of a communication and language activity with manager.
- The inspector spoke to children and parents.

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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