

Inspection of The Old Schoolhouse Kindergarten

239 London Road, Stanway, Colchester, Essex CO3 8PB

Inspection date: 17 February 2025

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 are keen, active and excited learners. They enter the nursery confidently and part from their parents and carers with ease. Staff in each room greet children in a welcoming manner. They spend time speaking to parents about any relevant information from home. Key persons use this information to ensure that every child's needs are met to a high standard. Children's care and learning is tailored to their individual needs, likes and dislikes. Children are confident and settled. They have good relationships with staff and each other, forming small friendship groups and assisting each other.

Children are enthusiastic about learning. They are provided with a broad curriculum that focuses on developing children's pride in their abilities. Staff plan activities that help children learn about respect, independence and emotional security. They are encouraged to be creative communicators from a young age. All staff are involved in developing and adapting the curriculum so that they are invested in the teaching approaches and practice is embedded effectively. Babies receive warm, gentle care from the adults caring for them. They are provided with effective opportunities to develop physical skills as they manoeuvre around the furniture and equipment specifically placed to encourage early standing and walking.

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

- The nursery is led and managed by competent members of the management team within the nursery. The team, in turn, is fully supported by the larger company. Staff speak enthusiastically about the support they receive and the training opportunities provided for them. Training is focused on providing staff with the skills they need. For example, those working with the younger children complete training around the needs of children aged under two years.
- Parents speak very highly of the managers, staff and general care of their children. They comment that they are happy to recommend the nursery to their friends and family. Some parents say that they like the fact that they are very involved in their children's nursery day. They receive effective information from staff about every aspect of their child's nursery experience.
- Staff promote children's speech and language development effectively through the use of songs, rhymes, stories and general discussions. They introduce new vocabulary and encourage children to recall experiences during discussions. Some staff, however, ask questions in very quick succession or do not allow children time to consider their responses.
- Children are provided with good opportunities to guide their own play and learning. Their voices are heard within the nursery. For example, pre-school children vote on the next activity by attaching pegs to the board, depicting their preference. Staff use clear language to explain this process and remind children

that they may also have time for the less favourable activity afterwards.

- Children are polite and speak to each other in a kind and caring manner. They cooperate, helping to carry the baskets of toys back to their shelf at tidy up time. Staff use positive language to praise them for doing such a good job and working well together. Children use good manners during mealtimes, saying please and thank you when offered drinks.
- Children enjoy a range of healthy and well-balanced meals freshly prepared on site. They sit together with their friends and staff and engage in gentle discussions. They enthusiastically tell staff about activities they have done at the weekend, providing a clear dialogue. They speak about going to see relatives and the journeys they took to do this. Staff listen attentively and engage in purposeful discussions with them.
- Children are provided with some opportunities to extend their knowledge outside of the general curriculum, for example, when visitors come into the nursery to share their expertise or specialism. However, staff have not considered how to extend these experiences further beyond the nursery premises.
- Children are provided with good opportunities to use their observations to explore their own identity. They discuss their eye colours, facial features and skin tones through self-portrait activities. Staff encourage them to talk about their similarities and differences.

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:

- guide staff to develop the use of effective questioning techniques to consistently enhance children's thinking skills that support their learning further
- consider ways to extend children's experiences beyond the nursery to further enhance their learning.

Setting details

Unique reference number	402180
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10378183
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	46
Number of children on roll	58
Name of registered person	The Old Schoolhouse Kindergarten Limited
Registered person unique reference number	RP907013
Telephone number	01206 213800
Date of previous inspection	9 August 2022

Information about this early years setting

The Old Schoolhouse Kindergarten registered in 1996. There are 13 staff members who work directly with the children, all of whom hold relevant childcare qualifications, ranging from level 2 to level 6. The nursery opens Monday to Friday, from 8am until 6pm, all year round, with the exception of bank holidays and one week over the Christmas period. The nursery provides government funded early years education for all eligible children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Lynn Hughes

Inspection activities

- The inspector viewed the provision and discussed the safety and suitability of the premises.
- The manager joined the inspector on a learning walk and talked about their curriculum and what they want children to learn.
- Children spoke to the inspector during the inspection.
- The inspector spoke to staff at appropriate times 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 inspector carried out a joint observation of an activity with the manager.
- Parents and carers shared their views of the nursery with the inspector.
- The manager showed the inspector documentation to demonstrate the suitability of staff.

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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