

Inspection of Chalkhouse@Earley

2 Elm Lane, Lower Earley, Reading RG6 5UF

Inspection date: 26 March 2025

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not applicable

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children settle quickly at this homely nursery, where staff and parents alike refer to the community ethos and that they feel like a big family. There is a strong focus on well-being, so that staff ensure that settling-in sessions are tailored to the individual needs of each child and their family. This attention to detail continues as children progress through the nursery, with key persons giving clear handovers to children's new key persons and children having as many visits to their new room as required to help them feel confident and secure. Children are happy and have a real sense of belonging at this nursery.

Staff plan plenty of interesting and fun activities to help children to make good progress. Toddlers and older children enjoy coming together to play in the garden, where they listen to stories, dig in the sandpit and climb up the slide with support from staff. Babies enjoy a lot of sensory play and lovely attention from the staff who look after them. The key-person system is particularly strong in this room, with staff adhering to children's routines and individual needs with genuine care and affection.

Children's behaviour is good and appropriate for their age and stage of development. Staff encourage older children to talk about their feelings and help them to learn about making good choices rather than bad choices. For example, children are praised for making good choices when they vocalise that they want to share, rather than trying to take items from another child.

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

- The management team and staff have worked hard to develop this relatively new nursery. There is a good focus on training to support staff to improve their knowledge and skills and revisit learning from courses they have already undertaken. For example, staff in the baby room have recently revisited training on care for very young babies, to secure their knowledge on matters such as bottle feeding and weaning.
- Children and staff come from a diverse range of cultures and backgrounds, and this is respected and celebrated in the setting. Staff work closely with parents to understand the range of festivals they observe and their different family make ups. This has a positive impact on children's cultural capital.
- Staff know the children very well and plan a varied curriculum where children can learn both indoors and outdoors. Staff provide an array of activities throughout the day that reflect all areas of learning. However, not all staff consistently extend learning opportunities for children. Some staff are less confident in recognising when they can challenge children's thinking and learning further.

- Overall, staff organise the learning environments indoors and outdoors well. Staff plan a range of activities outdoors so that children have plenty to do aside from physical play. For example, older children develop their fine motor skills as they use tweezers and scissors to pick up and cut cooked spaghetti. Babies have fun splashing in soapy water. However, not all areas are consistently well resourced. For example, on the day of the inspection, the mud kitchens in both gardens had no messy play materials for children to explore, despite there being tools and containers accessible to children. This limited children's choices should they have wished to use these.
- Children benefit from a language-rich environment. Staff sing, read and talk with children throughout the day. They regularly introduce them to new words. For instance, when playing with cooked spaghetti, staff talk to older children about how it is 'sticky' and how they can 'knead' it. Staff with babies use words such as 'squish' when they play with play dough and introduce animal sounds when they play with toy animals.
- Staff are good role models and treat children with kindness and respect. They praise children for being kind to their friends and sharing the resources. Staff understand children's differing personalities and provide good support to children who need more help to manage their emotions.
- Staff support children well to lead healthy lifestyles. Children have daily opportunities to play outside in the fresh air and they are offered a wide variety of nutritious meals and snacks. Children also learn about oral health and brush their teeth at nursery.
- Staff have created strong and effective partnerships with parents. Parents are very complimentary about the nursery and welcome the support and guidance given by staff to enable them to further support their child's learning at home.

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:

- focus support for less confident staff on developing their skills and confidence further in supporting children in their self-chosen play
- support staff to consider the learning environments and activities indoors and outdoors more thoroughly, so that they are consistently well resourced to support children's play and learning.

Setting details

Unique reference number	2718543
Local authority	Wokingham
Inspection number	10388575
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	44
Number of children on roll	53
Name of registered person	Chalkhouse Child Care Lower Earley Ltd
Registered person unique reference number	2718542
Telephone number	07547 896026
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

Chalkhouse@Earley registered in 2023 and is situated in Lower Earley, near Reading, Berkshire. The nursery is open each weekday from 7.30am to 6pm, for most of the year. It provides government funded early education places for children aged from nine months to four years. The nursery employs 12 staff who work directly with the children, eight of whom hold appropriate childcare qualifications at level 2 and above.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Nicky Hill

Inspection activities

- The manager and inspector completed a learning walk together of all areas of the nursery and discussed the early years curriculum.
- Children spoke 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 spoke with the nominated individual and manager about the leadership and management of the setting.
- 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 and manager carried out a joint observation of an activity.
- Parents shared their views of the setting with the inspector.
- The nominated individual provided the inspector with a sample of key documentation on request.

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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