

Inspection of Otters Nursery School

Otters Nursery School, Farleigh Road, Cliddesden, Basingstoke RG25 2JS

Inspection date: 22 July 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 demonstrate that they feel happy and secure at this enabling and nurturing setting. They arrive excited for their day and are pleased to see their friends. They are confident, settle well and show they have strong, loving bonds with staff. Even the youngest of children are familiar with the routines. For instance, babies excitedly toddle over when circle time begins. They independently select nursery rhymes and delight in singing alongside staff and their peers. They enthusiastically shake and bang musical instruments and explore different sounds. Toddlers show good self-care skills. They wipe their noses and pop tissues in the bin. They look in mirrors and take pride in washing their faces after their lunch.

Staff place a strong focus on children's independence, social and emotional development. They are respectful, kind and encourage children to identify feelings, such as when they are happy or sad. In addition, they use quiet corners and sand timers to help children explore and regulate their emotions. Children play well with their peers. Older children demonstrate this as they share their ideas and discuss the ingredients they need to make a mud pie. Together they explore their natural environment and excitedly collect resources from around the garden. Staff praise children for their achievements, which boosts their confidence and self-esteem.

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

- Leadership and management is strong. Staff say they feel valued and thoroughly enjoy working at the nursery. They show high levels of commitment to improving outcomes for children and are positive about the support they receive from each other and from leaders. They express how they are happy in the workplace and how their well-being is considered. Staff supervisions are carried out regularly. They have opportunities to enhance their professional development, such as through regular training and on-going support.
- Staff accurately assess children's learning. They understand where their key children are developmentally and what they know and can do. However, on occasion, not all staff identify and build on children's immediate curiosities in play. This means, at times, staff do not challenge and extend children's learning as fully as possible. Despite this, children overall are making good progress.
- Children's communication and language skills is embedded into the curriculum. Staff use a range of effective approaches, such as visual aids and basic sign language, to help ensure that all children can communicate their thoughts and ideas. The setting has a warm and welcoming atmosphere, where children enjoy joining in with songs alongside staff. Cosy book areas offer inviting spaces for children to look at familiar books independently or with their peers. Staff make good use of everyday interactions to introduce new words and support children's growing vocabulary, which helps to build a strong foundation for future learning.

- Staff support children's physical development well overall. They teach older children how to take safe and controlled risks that strengthen their balance and coordination, such as through climbing trees. Toddlers practise their jumping skills and delight in catching bubbles. However, staff provide fewer opportunities to support the physical development of younger children. This limits the potential to build on children's skills and progress even further.
- Staff are good role models. They remind children of the nursery rules and support them to resolve conflicts independently. Children show kindness to their peers. They share and take turns with others, and are learning how to manage their behaviour effectively.
- Children develop increasing independence in managing their self-care routines. They demonstrate good hygiene habits and are beginning to understand why handwashing is important, particularly before meals and snacks. Throughout the day, all children access drinking water independently. This supports children to understand the importance of healthy lifestyles.
- Staff have positive parent partnerships. Parents comment positively on the strong bonds their children have with staff and the care their children receive. However, although staff share information on children's progress, they do not share details on children's specific next steps in learning and guidance to support their child's development 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:

- support all staff to consistently recognise opportunities that arise from children's immediate interests to fully extend their learning
- expand the opportunities for younger children to engage in a broader range of physical activities, to further support their development and skills
- strengthen communication with parents so that all parents have information about their child's next steps in learning and how they can support their child's development at home.

Setting details

Unique reference number	2837140
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	10414012
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	56
Number of children on roll	61
Name of registered person	ABC Learning Limited
Registered person unique reference number	RP560525
Telephone number	07557642510
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

Otters Nursery School re-registered in 2025, and is situated in Cliddesden, Basingstoke, Hampshire. The nursery employs 15 members of staff. Ten staff members hold appropriate qualifications at level 3 or above. The nursery opens Monday to Friday, from 8am to 6pm, for 51 weeks of the year. The nursery provides funded early education for children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Jane Franks

Inspection activities

- The manager joined the inspector on a learning walk and talked about their curriculum and what they want their children to learn.
- A joint observation was completed and discussed with the manager.
- The inspector observed the implementation of the curriculum during activities indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact this has on children's learning.
- Parents shared their views through written comments and discussion during the inspection and the inspector took account of all feedback received.
- The inspector spoke with staff and children at suitable times throughout the inspection.
- During the inspection, the inspector held a meeting with the management team. She looked at relevant documentation, such as evidence of the suitability of staff working in the pre-school.

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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