

Inspection of Surestart - Where Kids Come First

The Ockenden Children's Centre, 2a Afton Drive, SOUTH OCKENDON, Essex RM15 5PA

Inspection date: 25 June 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 come into the nursery excited to learn and to share their news with staff about what they have done since they last met. They are aware of the routines, and they independently hang their belongings up and make their way to a chosen activity.

Children have developed very strong attachments with staff, who have created a safe environment where children are confident, happy and secure. Staff have high expectations of children's behaviour, and they have created a culture of mutual respect. Positive behaviour is promoted through encouraging responsibility, for example involving children in tidy-up routines. Children are given scripts to help them navigate difficult situations. For example, when they face difficulties with friends, staff remind them to say, 'Please don't do that, I don't like it.' This empowers children to recognise and respond to uncomfortable and unwanted situations.

Children are provided with a stimulating learning environment full of activities to explore. Staff plan an exciting curriculum using books as their theme. This promotes a love for books and reading. Children are engaged and enthusiastic when they listen to stories that are brought to life through staff's animated and expressive reading. Children are encouraged to create their own stories, which staff scribe for them, and they add illustrations to create their own personalised storybook.

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

- Effective monitoring systems are in place to ensure all children make good progress. When additional support is needed, referrals are made promptly, enabling children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), to access appropriate help and continue to achieve well.
- Older children develop resilience, learn how to think ahead, trust themselves and figure out how risky something is when they take part in risky play activities. They hang upside down on a large climbing frame, using just their legs to secure themselves, and they use hammers and nails to create a small wooden scarecrow. Children confidently explain how they made and dressed their scarecrow to go in the garden to scare the birds away.
- Overall, staff provide effective support for children's communication and language development. They incorporate singing and action rhymes into daily routines and engage children in meaningful conversations, often encouraging them to reflect on shared experiences. However, strategies to enhance the speech and comprehension of children who speak English as an additional language are not yet fully embedded in practice.

- Babies learn to become independent through spending time with and observing older children. They are encouraged to get their shoes, put their sun hats on and feed themselves at lunchtime. Older children get themselves dressed for physical education (PE), wipe the table after lunch and help staff to serve fruits at snack time.
- Children have attention skills beyond those expected for their age. Babies concentrate with intent as they observe minibeasts in a bucket, and older children wait their turn patiently during PE. However, on occasion, some activities take too long, and children become fidgety and restless.
- Older children confidently speak to visitors, telling them about their recent minibeast visit, and talk about what they are doing in the nursery today. Babies maintain good eye contact during their back-and-forth interactions with staff.
- Parents speak highly of the care and education that their children receive at the nursery. They say that their children settle quickly, and where children struggle to settle, clear plans are put in place to support them. Parents are happy with the progress that their children have made. They feel supported by staff, and they appreciate the open communication.
- Consistent supervision and a thorough induction process help staff understand their roles and responsibilities clearly, while also enabling leaders to identify areas for further development.
- Staff work well as a team, and they are well positioned around the nursery and garden throughout the day to best support learning and maintain children's safety.
- Settling in is arranged around the needs of children, so that they feel safe and happy to learn. Families are invited to visit the nursery before their children start. This helps them get used to the new environment and staff. Staff settle children well during this time. They spend one-to-one time with them, plan activities around their interests and encourage families to bring in a comforter from home to help the settling-in process.

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 in reviewing how group-time activities are organised to best support children's engagement in their learning
- embed consistent supportive strategies to help children who speak English as an additional language to further develop their communication and understanding.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY337731
Local authority	Thurrock
Inspection number	10388565
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	1 to 11
Total number of places	33
Number of children on roll	60
Name of registered person	Surestart Committee
Registered person unique reference number	RP520615
Telephone number	01708 670011
Date of previous inspection	17 July 2019

Information about this early years setting

Surestart - Where Kids Come First registered in 2006 and is run by a committee. The setting employs 14 members of childcare staff. Of these, seven staff hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 or above. The setting opens from Monday to Friday, for 51 weeks of the year. Sessions are from 8am until 6pm. The setting provides funded early education for all eligible children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Keiley Pedro

Inspection activities

- The manager and the inspector went on a learning walk around the nursery and discussed the early years curriculum.
- The inspector spoke to parents to get their views about the nursery.
- Children spoke with the inspector about what they do at the nursery.
- The inspector observed the quality of education, both indoors and outdoors, and considered the impact it was having on children's learning.
- Staff spoke to the inspector at appropriate times during the inspection, and she took account of their views.
- The inspector and the manager carried out a joint evaluation during snack time.
- Staff spoke to the inspector about how they support children with SEND.
- Several parents shared their views of the nursery with the inspector during the inspection.

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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