The Old Station Nursery, Heyford Park

Unique reference number (URN): EY557985

Address: Old Station Nursery, Camp Road, Upper Heyford, Bicester, OX25 5BS

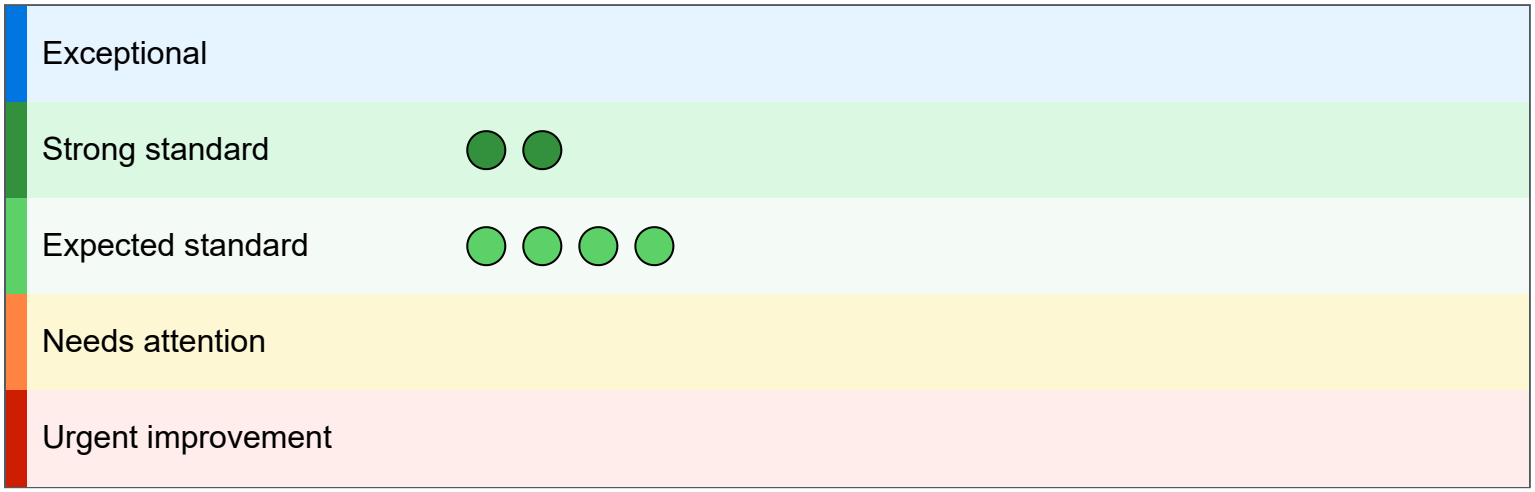
Type: Childcare on non-domestic premises

Registered with Ofsted: 27/02/2018

Registers: EYR, CCR, VCR

Registered person: The Old Station Nursery Limited

Inspection report: 4 June 2026



Safeguarding standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, children are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect settings for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- Met: The setting has an open and positive culture of safeguarding.
- Not met: The setting has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

Strong standard

Children's welfare and wellbeing

Strong standard

Staff know the children incredibly well. They gather information that helps them learn about children when they first attend nursery. They use this information effectively to plan a highly successful learning environment that removes barriers to learning. This enables all children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, to fully access the provision. Children engage and join their friends in a range of interesting activities that support their focus, and they show joy in their chosen activity.

Children engage and focus on their play and learning. Staff provide individual and targeted support to meet the varying ages, stages and needs of the children.

Staff know children's routines very well. For example, staff ensure that children with medical needs have personalised care plans in place. Staff ensure that they document key information to share with parents and partner agencies to ensure a consistent approach in supporting children's needs. Staff adapt their approach in teaching and care, to actively support children to understand the importance of making healthy choices. For example, staff provide choices to support children to make decisions about healthy food. For example, leaders work with the kitchen staff to make appropriate adjustments to their menus and meal provision wherever possible.

Children are learning to be independent as they put on their wellington boots and coats to play outside. The key-person system is highly effective. Children are confident and secure in asking for help when needed. Staff nurture children and encourage them to have a go themselves before providing help.

Inclusion

Strong standard

Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive highly effective and individualised support. Leaders and staff are quick to identify gaps in children's learning and work closely with parents to remove any barriers to their learning to enable children to fully access the provision. Staff expertly use their skills and knowledge about children to ensure that they receive the targeted support they need to make steady progress.

Leaders and staff liaise with partner agencies and parents incredibly well to ensure that they share information that best supports the varying and individual needs of children. As a result, all children, including those with SEND, are able to engage and focus on their learning and development well. Children with SEND, as well as those with barriers to learning, succeed alongside their friends.

Leaders source additional funding and use this effectively to support and provide learning experiences that children might not otherwise have access to. For example, they use some additional funding for fortnightly sessions to promote children's physical development and personal, social and emotional skills through an external agency who provides music and movement activities. Children actively engage in these activities and show great joy and pride in their abilities in joining in.

Leaders and staff are confident to invite and draw on expertise from partner agencies to fully support the varying needs of children, specifically those with SEND.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard

Children are secure and settled at nursery. They are quick to engage in play with their friends and are happy and confident communicators. They actively share their ideas and thoughts with staff who are quick to engage and support children's interest.

Babies are developing their physical skills and are growing in confidence as they move, climb and take tentative steps. Older children sustain focus in group activities and develop their mathematical skills and knowledge, as well as their communication and language skills as they join in with favourite stories and songs.

Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities make significant progress from their staring points with well-planned and individual targeted support. This helps reduce any gaps or barriers to learning during their time at nursery.

Overall, across the nursery, children make steady progress that supports them in their next steps in learning and development.

Behaviour, attitudes and establishing routines

Expected standard

Leaders and staff plan and provide an environment where children typically thrive and feel secure. There is an effective and nurturing key-person system in place that supports children to build and develop positive, warm and caring relationships with the adults that care for them and their peers. Children generally settle well into nursery, and parents speak highly of the key-person arrangements and the knowledge that all staff have about their children. Staff respond to and meet children's needs well. They know children well and how best to support them and provide the care and encouragement that enables them to engage in their chosen play and learning.

Children behave well and show positive attitudes as they engage and focus in a range of activities. There are consistent expectations from staff to help children regulate their behaviour and recognise their emotions. Staff provide lots of praise and encouragement that supports children's positive behaviour.

There are established routines that help children know what to expect and when. They actively participate in daily tasks as part of the routine. For example, children enjoy tidying up and cleaning ready for mealtimes.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard

Leaders and staff have developed a broad curriculum that is sequenced to reflect the varying ages and stages of the children attending. This builds on what children know and can do and prepares them well for their next steps in learning. Children grow in confidence and develop independence skills as they make choices and decisions about their play and learning. Staff provide effective discussion and teaching during group activities, and children engage and focus well in their learning. However, at times particularly during free play and outside play, staff's interactions do not consistently promote children's learning and development. For example, children move between activities outside in quick succession as they become disengaged and loose focus.

Children develop their physical skills through many activities. They particularly enjoy music and movement activities, which also support communication and language skills as children join in and sing with enthusiasm. This supports quieter children as they join in with singing favourite songs.

Independence skills are encouraged, and children manage their own care needs. For example, children independently change their shoes for outside play. They show great joy as they secure their skills in jumping and balancing as they splash in puddles.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard

Leaders have a good oversight of the nursery. They know and recognise their strengths and areas for improvement. They develop effective procedures to ensure continuous improvement and reflective practice. This approach enables them to identify areas of weakness. They use this knowledge and are working to embed improvements in training, coaching and support for staff to ensure consistent high-quality teaching and interactions with children. This will support ongoing learning and development progress for all children. Leaders review all aspects of the nursery to inform practice to support ongoing improvements.

Staff report they feel valued and supported. They enjoy their work and feel they have a reasonable and manageable workload. They comment that they are very well supported and that their wellbeing is a priority for leaders.

Staff build positive and professional relationships with parents. They share relevant information about children's learning and invite parents into the setting for special events. These opportunities help to foster meaningful and effective partnerships that contribute positively to children's progress. Staff are proactive in identifying any gaps in learning. They are quick to respond to individual needs to ensure that children receive the support and teaching they need to make steady progress.

Compulsory Childcare Register requirements

This setting has met the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register.

How we check if a provider meets the requirements of the Compulsory Childcare Register

When we check if settings meet the Compulsory Childcare Register requirements, they can have the following outcomes:

- Met
- Not met

Voluntary Childcare Register requirements

This setting has met the requirements of the voluntary part of Childcare Register.

How we check if a provider meets the requirements of the Voluntary Childcare Register

When we check if settings meet the Voluntary Childcare Register requirements, they can have the following outcomes:

- Met
- Not met

What it's like to be a child at this setting

Children are warmly welcomed by caring and nurturing staff. They are met with smiles and conversations about their home lives and how their morning was before they arrived at nursery. This helps children develop strong bonds that support them in feeling safe and secure at nursery. Children are quick to join their friends and engage in their chosen play. Staff know the children and their families well as they enquire about children's siblings and wider family members. Children develop independence skills. For example, they are encouraged to remove their outdoor clothing and shoes themselves after playing outside.

Children's safety and welfare are prioritised effectively. Leaders ensure that effective risk assessments are in place so that children remain safe in their care. For example, while children engage in physical activities outside, staff ensure that the garden is secure and equipment is safe to use.

Leaders monitor attendance carefully and have robust procedures to promote regular attendance. Staff work in partnership with parents to reduce barriers to children's learning and understand each child's individual needs. Additionally, leaders offer extra sessions where needed to help children settle and become confident and secure within the nursery.

Next steps

- Leaders should further develop the provision for outdoor play to ensure that children have consistent access to a purposeful and effective curriculum.
- Leaders should enhance staff's training and coaching to build on and develop staff's skills in providing consistent quality interactions that support children's ongoing learning and development.

About this inspection

The inspectors spoke with leaders, parents and children 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.

Inspector:
Lisa Robinson

About this setting

Unique reference number (URN): EY557985

Address:
Old Station Nursery
Camp Road
Upper Heyford
Bicester
OX25 5BS

Type: Childcare on non-domestic premises

Registration date: 27/02/2018

Registered person: The Old Station Nursery Limited

Register(s): EYR, CCR, VCR

Operating hours: Monday,Tuesday,Wednesday,Thursday,Friday : 08:00 - 18:00

Local authority: Oxfordshire

Facts and figures used on inspection

This data was available to the inspector at the time of the inspection.

This data is from 4 June 2026

Children numbers

Age range of children at the time of inspection

0 to 4

Total number of places

64

Our grades explained

Exceptional

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other settings can learn from it.

Strong standard

The setting reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard

The setting is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement

The setting needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

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