

Inspection of Clarence House Thetford

Theatre House, White Hart Street, Thetford, Norfolk IP24 1AD

Inspection date: 7 May 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

Leaders have a clear vision for the curriculum. They follow a child-led learning approach, where children are encouraged to think for themselves and make their own choices. For example, children freely access the play dough station, choosing what ingredients to use to make their dough. Children enjoy a range of sensory activities that stimulates their curiosity. For instance, children mix shaving foam with sand, pretending it is cement for building with their bricks.

Children play well together. Staff use strategies to promote positive behaviour. For example, they regularly praise children for their efforts and achievements. When children have disagreements, staff remind them of their expectations and help them to understand how their behaviour affects others. As a result, children behave well and have formed strong friendships.

Children enjoy daily time in the outdoor spaces. Staff encourage them to search for insects in the soil and bark, emphasising that insects should be handled carefully. Children develop their large muscles as they learn to roll hula hoops and navigate obstacles on the balance bikes. These activities help children to develop their spatial awareness and coordination.

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

- The nursery has been through a period of change following its acquisition by a new provider. The new management team has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the nursery and a clear vision for further development, including plans to enhance the outdoor facilities.
- Children have plenty of opportunities to practise using their fine motor skills. For example, staff encourage children to squeeze water from pipettes in the water tray and use rolling pins to flatten dough. Children make their play dough into flat circles and enjoy pretending to flip them, explaining that they have made pancakes. These opportunities build the small muscles in their hands and help prepare them for developing further skills, such as their early writing skills.
- Overall, children's communication and language skills are well promoted. Staff introduce new vocabulary during play, modelling and repeating simple words for younger children during activities, such as 'splash, splash, splash'. This helps children, particularly those who speak English as an additional language, connect actions to words. However, staff do not always provide children with clear communication during transition times, such as tidy-up time or when they are going out into the garden. This confuses children, and they sometimes become upset because they do not know what is happening next.
- Staff encourage children to use their imagination. For example, they encourage children to pretend to put their hiking boots on to climb a mountain. Staff

provide a range of open-ended resources for children to explore. Children enthusiastically paint a large cardboard box, transforming it into a house.

- Children demonstrate increasing independence. For example, they access the water dispenser when they need a drink and use tongs to serve their food. All children enjoy freshly prepared snacks and meals. Older children manage their own hygiene needs, such as blowing their nose and using the toilet independently. Staff act as good role models by discussing the importance of washing hands after using the bathroom and before eating.
- Staff comment that they are happy in their roles and feel well supported by the management team. They have started to take advantage of professional development opportunities, including additional training. Leaders have begun implementing supervision meetings. However, they acknowledge that they have not yet had the time to fully establish or embed the systems for monitoring and coaching staff to improve their individual practices.
- Parents reflect that there have been several changes in the staffing team since the change of provider. They state that the new leaders are having a positive impact as they settle into their roles. Parents are pleased with the progress that their children are making. However, not all parents receive information regarding their child's learning progress, what they need to learn next and how to support their 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:

- support younger children, particularly those who speak English as an additional language, understand what is happening now and what will happen next to help them feel more secure
- continue to build on partnerships with parents by sharing more information about children's learning and next steps to support with their children's home learning
- embed the current systems for monitoring and coaching staff to enhance individual practices and provide feedback that supports staff in delivering the curriculum more effectively.

Setting details

Unique reference number	2803876
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10402672
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	0 to 4
Total number of places	65
Number of children on roll	84
Name of registered person	Clarence House Day Nurseries Ltd
Registered person unique reference number	RP903550
Telephone number	01842 337330
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

Clarence House Thetford registered in 2024. The nursery employs eleven members of childcare staff, of these, seven hold an appropriate early years qualifications at level 2 and above. The setting is open from Monday to Friday from 8am to 5.30pm, all year round. The nursery provides funded early education.

Information about this inspection

Inspector
Shelly McDougall

Inspection activities

- The manager joined the inspector on a learning walk and talked to the inspector about their curriculum and what they want the children to learn.
- Children told the inspector about their friends and what they like to do when they are at nursery.
- The inspector talked to staff at appropriate times during the inspection 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 spoke to several parents during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The inspector looked at relevant documentation and reviewed evidence of the suitability of staff working in the nursery.

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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