

Inspection of Harwich Connexions Windmill Nursery Limited

Mayes Lane, Ramsey, Harwich, Essex CO12 5EL

Inspection date:

1 August 2025

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Overall effectiveness at previous
inspection

Not applicable

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision requires improvement

The quality of education requires improvement to ensure all children benefit from a consistently high standard of learning. Children are happy and safe in the nursery and staff are caring and attentive. However, weaknesses in curriculum implementation, leadership oversight and behaviour management in some areas, limit the impact of teaching and learning across the nursery.

At times, the quality of teaching is good. Staff engage children in topics, such as minibeasts. Children work together to create a 'bug hotel'. They show care and sensitivity to insects they find, declaring that they must move into the hotel. Staff help them to recall prior learning, such as the ants in the book they read and how they made a bridge. However, they do not always extend children's learning. For instance, children wave with excitement at an aeroplane that flies overhead. Staff point it out but do not follow up with meaningful discussion or extension.

Children are generally well behaved. Staff offer positive guidance, such as praising children for waiting. They remind children to say 'excuse me' when friends are in their way. Staff provide clear boundaries and encouragement, particularly in physical play, which encourages risk and challenge. However, not all children's emotional or behavioural needs are addressed consistently. They are not fully supported by staff to remain engaged in their play and learning, despite staff being aware of their challenges.

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

- Outdoor play supports children's physical development. Children roll and race tyres up and down hills. This develops their core strength and coordination. Children grow produce in the garden. They explore textures as they mix sand and water together to make sandcastles. Younger children explore sand with obvious delight. They develop balance and coordination as they navigate the outdoor environments.
- Interactions, particularly in the younger children's rooms, are warm and nurturing. Staff use descriptive vocabulary, such as 'big yellow ball' and 'shake shake shake', as they play alongside children. They support language development through singing and storytelling. Children find animals on the farm mat as they sing 'Old MacDonald's Farm'.
- Leaders have introduced a new curriculum, which prioritises children's communication and independence. However, this is not yet understood by all staff and is not consistently seen in practice. This results in inconsistent planning and learning opportunities for children that meet their individual needs.
- Rooms for youngest children provide a nurturing environment, where children build early communication and social skills. Songs, interactive play and sensory

materials engage children well. Children across the nursery develop an awareness of the natural world through gardening activities and exploration of their surroundings.

- Children show some emerging independence. They manage their personal hygiene and put on their shoes. There is some additional independence with peeling of fruits at snack. However, this is limited to a few children. Opportunities for children to develop independence are limited and not built consistently into routines. For example, staff do not encourage children to wash up after meals, despite this being an aim of the curriculum.
- Children enjoy healthy meals and snacks. They have a range of fruits and crackers and access water regularly. Children follow familiar routines, such as getting ready for lunch. However, lunchtime routines are disorganised. Young children are sat at tables long before food arrives. This leads to some children becoming fractious as they wait. Experiences for older children lack role modelling from staff to support good social manners. This affects the quality of the children's experience.
- Staff demonstrate an understanding of individual needs, particularly for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Children make the progress they are capable of with the support of specialist staff. However, the quality of education and care is not consistently strong across the nursery. Some children with emerging developmental needs do not receive sufficient adult interaction to support sustained engagement or learning.
- Supervisions are scheduled termly for staff. However, they do not fully support staff's professional development. Staff attend a range of training, but this is limited to essential learning and not clearly linked to improvement in the quality of their teaching practice. Furthermore, staff have insufficient opportunities to reflect on their practice and consider areas for improvement.
- Leadership oversight is not strong. Despite identifying areas that need to improve, leaders do not provide the clear direction and role modelling needed to raise the quality of staff's teaching. The impact of change is not robustly monitored or reviewed. Consequently, ongoing improvements are not assured.

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 meet the requirements of the early years foundation stage and Childcare Register the provider must:

	Due date
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ensure training for staff actively contributes to raising the quality of education and staff confidence in delivering the curriculum	31/10/2025
ensure regular, meaningful supervision and performance management that identifies training needs, provides regular feedback and supports staff development.	31/10/2025

To further improve the quality of the early years provision, the provider should:

- ensure that leaders have clear oversight of the quality of teaching and use sharply focused evaluation to measure the impact of any changes on children's learning and development
- review arrangements for mealtimes to ensure they are positive and social experiences for all children
- support staff to recognise and respond to children who need support to sustain their interests and engagement in learning.

Setting details

Unique reference number	2782795
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10405929
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	1 to 5
Total number of places	50
Number of children on roll	98
Name of registered person	Harwich Connexions Windmill Nursery Limited
Registered person unique reference number	2782794
Telephone number	01255 880135
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

Harwich Connections Windmill Nursery Limited registered in 2024. The nursery employs 18 members of childcare staff. Of these, 10 hold appropriate early years qualifications. The nursery is open from 8am to 6pm, Monday to Friday, for 50 weeks of the year. The nursery provides funded early education for all eligible children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector
Clare Ford

Inspection activities

- The manager joined the inspector for a learning walk and discussed their curriculum and what they want their children to learn.
- The inspector observed the quality of teaching and interactions, both inside and outside.
- The manager and inspector carried out a joint observation of an outside activity.
- Parents shared their views with the inspector and their views were taken into account.
- The inspector viewed a sample of documentation to demonstrate safeguarding.

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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