

Inspection of Oak Wood Nursery and Forest School

Oak Wood Nursery, 251 Clapgate Lane, Ipswich, Suffolk IP3 0RH

Inspection date: 4 August 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 develop lovely friendships with each other and staff. When children arrive, the other children run to greet them at the door, giving them a very warm welcome. Staff thoughtfully create a calm, nurturing nursery for children to enjoy. The environment, both indoors and outdoors, is well presented at children's level so that they can self-select. Babies have their own room, including an outdoor area. Children arrive ready to learn, and they are enthusiastic and keen to explore. Staff have high expectations of children's behaviour, and children behave well.

The outdoor area is a significant strength. Children demonstrate high levels of engagement in their learning, eager to explore the natural environment. They show curiosity as they search for insects, and staff support this interest effectively by promptly providing resources, such as magnifying glasses, to enhance their investigations.

Staff place great importance on listening to children, giving them all a voice. They courteously ask permission before changing children and involve them in decisions. Staff actively seek children's opinions. For example, children devise the rules for the sensory space, deciding how many children can safely be in the room at one time. Staff continuously praise children's efforts, supporting their developing self-esteem.

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

- The provider previously notified Ofsted about an incident where a child was left unsupervised in the garden for a short time. This means that the provider met their legal responsibility to notify Ofsted of significant events. The provider has taken suitable action to put this right. Leaders have reviewed the risk assessment. They have ensured that the supervision of children remains a priority for staff and have strengthened their procedures on carrying out a headcount of children. This promotes children's safety when moving around the nursery.
- Staff plan an exciting curriculum with a focus on promoting independence, building resilience and developing language and communication. It is evident in practice that attention is given to enabling children to be independent through a range of daily tasks, such as the responsibility of labelling and pegging up their paintings to dry. Staff know their key children exceptionally well and input into the weekly plan. They regularly check children's development and use this information to ensure they are challenged appropriately. All children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good progress.
- Children are developing their language and communication. Staff extend children's vocabulary through stories, discussions and regular songs, especially during routines such as handwashing. The children engage well, and even the

youngest join in with the tunes and actions of familiar songs. Children really enjoy listening to stories, and story sacks are used well to engage them further. However, at times, the background noise distracts children during group time, which limits their engagement. Furthermore, staff do not consistently make the most of every opportunity to extend children's language further through the conversations they have.

- Children's imagination and creativity are very much encouraged by staff, who love to join in and extend children's play. For example, staff pretend to have magic wands and wave sticks around, discussing what magic can do.
- Mathematics is evident in children's play. Staff encourage children to add items and compare sizes. For example, children show a particular interest in different length tubes. They focus their efforts to find objects that will fit through the tubes and experiment with which goes faster, working well together.
- The outdoor areas are set up to offer children a huge array of learning and play opportunities, which enable children to develop a good range of physical skills and be active. Children enjoy running down the hill and show whole-body control as they stop quickly at the bottom. They enjoy planting and taking care of vegetables, using tools such as a rake. Children attend forest schools every week, broadening their outdoor experiences further.
- Leaders implement rigorous systems to monitor and support staff's ongoing professional development. Regular supervision meetings are used effectively to identify training needs and provide guidance, resulting in a highly skilled and motivated team. This commitment to continuous improvement ensures that the quality of care and education remains high across the provision.

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:

- minimise noise levels when interacting with children so they can fully focus on their learning
- support staff to consistently make the most of every opportunity to extend children's language.

Setting details

Unique reference number	2844144
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	10412337
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	1 to 4
Total number of places	49
Number of children on roll	61
Name of registered person	Bows and Arrows
Registered person unique reference number	RP528927
Telephone number	01473 599038
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

Oak Wood Nursery registered in 2025 and operates from a purpose-built building in Ipswich, Suffolk. It is one of seven nurseries managed by Bows and Arrows, a charitable, not-for-profit limited company. The nursery employs 13 members of childcare staff. Of these, two have a level 5 qualification, five have a level 3 qualification and the remaining staff are working towards at least a level 2 qualification. The nursery opens Monday to Friday, from 8am until 6pm, all year round, with the exception of bank holidays. It is also closed for a week in July, a week at Christmas and three professional development days across the year. The nursery provides funded education for all eligible children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector
Emily Holt

Inspection activities

- This inspection was carried out as a result of a risk assessment, following information received about the provider.
- The manager and inspector completed a learning walk together of all areas of the nursery and discussed the early years curriculum.
- The inspector and manager carried out a joint observation.
- Staff spoke to the inspector during the inspection.
- 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.
- Children spoke 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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