

Inspection of The Hive Forest School Nursery

T H Z Conservation Volunteers, Stave Hill Ecological Park, Timber Pond Road,
London SE16 6AX

Inspection date: 2 September 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

The Hive Forest Nursery School offers children a warm and nurturing start to their day. On arrival, children are greeted by their key person, which fosters secure attachments and helps them settle confidently. The woodland environment is carefully prepared and resourced, with a secure perimeter, clear boundaries and daily risk assessments ensuring children's safety. Covered areas, a tepee for quiet and cosy time and a well-equipped base camp allow children to learn and play in all weathers. Children experience an engaging curriculum rooted in the forest school ethos, making the most of natural resources and the changing seasons. They enjoy activities such as planting, mud kitchen play, tool use, fire building and imaginative role play. Staff encourage exploration and curiosity, for example, during woodland walks and scavenger hunts. Children's care needs are met sensitively, with nappy changing and toileting managed with dignity and respect. Younger children rest in the tepee under supervision, while older children show independence in routines such as changing into waterproof clothing.

Children are supported to recognise and talk about feelings through visual aids, Makaton and emotion cards. Staff model positive interactions and reinforce expectations, helping children become kind, respectful, confident and resilient. Children demonstrate positive behaviour.

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

- Leaders provide a purposeful outdoor curriculum that nurtures children's curiosity and independence. Seasonal planning deepens children's understanding of the natural world, while activities, such as tool use, storytelling and creative arts, enhance fine motor, language and early literacy skills.
- Staff know their key children well and use observations effectively to plan next steps. New starters quickly form secure attachments through sensory exploration, while older children extend problem-solving and teamwork in role play and forest school challenges. This helps children to make strong progress in their learning and personal development.
- Parents praise the warmth of staff and their strong daily communication. This helps parents understand routines and expectations, creating consistency between home and nursery. Children feel secure and supported and make strong progress in key areas.
- Staff prioritise children's communication and language. They use sign language, commentary and songs to reinforce understanding. Children join in with rhymes and refrains, building confidence and vocabulary. Animated storytelling and rich book provision capture interest, giving children meaningful opportunities to practise speaking.
- Leaders ensure staff access training to deepen knowledge of child development.

Staff report this training improves how they support key children's progress. They feel valued and well supported, which strengthens staff confidence and consistency in practice, positively impacting children's outcomes.

- Staff share in children's enthusiasm and curiosity. For instance, during outdoor play, when children discovered a toad, staff engaged with their excitement while reinforcing safety and kindness. They reminded children not to hold it and explained it was a baby with its mother. This supported children's empathy, respect for nature and self-regulation, while deepening their understanding of the natural world.
- Staff actively promote healthy attitudes through gardening, foraging and discussions about nutritious food. They teach children that natural foods support health. At lunchtime, staff monitor packed lunches, support younger children and join in conversations, encouraging social skills. Children learn about healthy choices and social etiquette around eating together.
- Leaders and staff work with external professionals to support children who may have special educational needs and/or disabilities. This ensures early identification and targeted strategies, helping children make progress from their starting points. However, information sharing with other early years providers is not yet embedded. For example, when children attend another nursery, targets and next steps are not consistently shared. This limits continuity of learning and risks gaps in children's progress across settings.
- Staff promote children's independence well through curriculum activities, such as handwashing before meals, and using tools to make elder wood pencils. However, staff do not consistently embed expectations for environmental responsibility across all curriculum areas. During independent play and continuous provision, staff do not regularly reinforce learning about caring for resources, such as replacing pen lids or tidying equipment after water play. This means the curriculum does not fully support children to develop independence and responsibility for their environment.

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:

- strengthen partnerships with other settings that children attend to promote continuity in learning
- support children to take more responsibility for their environment and resources.

Setting details

Unique reference number	2819768
Local authority	Southwark
Inspection number	10414279
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register
Day care type	Sessional day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	2 to 4
Total number of places	12
Number of children on roll	24
Name of registered person	Just Sow Limited
Registered person unique reference number	RP534056
Telephone number	020 3435 6848
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

The Hive Forest School Nursery registered in December 2024. The nursery employs five members of childcare staff. Of these, two hold qualified teacher status and two hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3. The nursery is open from 9am to 3.30pm, Monday and Tuesday only. The setting provides funded early education for two-, three-and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Honufa Begum

Inspection activities

- The provider and the inspector completed a learning walk together and discussed the early years foundation stage curriculum on offer.
- The inspector spoke with staff at appropriate times during the inspection.
- The provider and the inspector carried out a joint observation of an activity.
- The inspector held a management meeting with the provider and reviewed relevant evidence to demonstrate the suitability of staff working in the setting.
- The inspector spoke to a parents and took account of their views.

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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