

Inspection of The Watership Down Nursery

Lady Rose Hall, Laverstoke Lane, Whitchurch, Hampshire RG28 7NY

Inspection date: 12 August 2024

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Overall effectiveness at previous
inspection

Good

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is outstanding

Babies and children thrive in this small, exceptional and home-from-home nursery. They arrive at the door and a familiar face immediately greets them. Staff ask parents how the children have been and they happily wave goodbye. Children enter the nursery excited to find out what the passionate staff have provided for them to explore.

The dedicated staff create an extremely broad curriculum based on the children's interests and development. They plan activities to encourage children's individual learning at every opportunity. Staff tailor their planning based on meticulous assessments of the children. As a result, all children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make exceptional progress from their starting points.

The innovative staff develop children's language extremely well. Makaton signing is an integral part of their communication for all children, but particularly for those who have yet to gain their voice. Staff share the sign of the week with parents so they can practise and encourage this at home. Staff read books and sing songs with infectious enthusiasm, which helps to engage even the youngest children. As a result, children's communication skills are excellent and they are able to hold conversations with adults and children.

Staff have high expectations and subsequently children show respect for the toys and equipment. Children's behaviour is exemplary, and they are kind and caring towards their friends. For example, children help their friends to put on their shoes and socks, ready to go outside.

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

- The outstanding leadership team has an ambitious vision. There is a clear direction for the nursery which builds on what leaders have already created. They value the experienced staff and ensure well-being is supported. Regular supervisions and training, including purposeful in-service training days, help to ensure staff are knowledgeable and professionally updated. For example, they have recently accessed training on outdoor provision. This helps to ensure they provide the best opportunities for the children.
- The incredible staff devise a curriculum that is unique and inspiring. They work closely with the neighbouring day-care centre and children visit to sing songs. Children go on trips to the village by bus and walk to the 14th century church for quiet reflection. These innovative opportunities help children to learn about the community in which they live. Staff place a strong focus on mindfulness for children. For example, children take part in regular yoga sessions and keenly

practise the different positions, including the elegant 'butterfly'. Staff plan mindfulness sessions for children to undertake each day.

- Staff encourage children to problem-solve and learn to manage risks. For example, during role play, children want to cut their carrots to feed the 'babies'. They attempt to cut them, and then find it easier to snap them to make them smaller to fit into the bowls. Staff support children to learn about road safety too as they walk outside. Children are familiar with the routine. They put on their high-visibility jackets, hold hands with a friend and look left and right when they approach the road. Children learn how to keep themselves and their friends safe.
- Children have exciting opportunities to develop and strengthen their large and small muscles. Staff provide hands-on experiences for children in the enabling outdoor area. For example, children pull up the carrots and onions in the allotment to take into the nursery for snack. They keenly share their vegetables. Staff encourage children to rub the herb rosemary between their fingers and then smell their hands. Children confidently communicate that they have rosemary on their potatoes at home.
- The inspirational leadership team is keen to provide the best experiences. Leaders are very evaluative and take on board, and action, feedback from parents. The nursery has won a sustainability award from the local town for their commitment to recycling. The owner is also involved in a 'boot camp' initiative with the local authority to help get individuals to work in childcare. Children ultimately benefit from the innovative practice.
- Staff support children's personal development extremely well. They provide 'tissue stations' and children intently look at themselves in the mirror as they blow their noses. Children giggle excitedly at their reflections. Staff include children in helping to prepare snacks and every activity is a learning opportunity. Children peel bananas and chop them up, ready to serve. They squeeze oranges to create their own drinks. Staff encourage children's learning at mealtimes. For example, when the children get confused naming the vegetables on their plates, attentive staff find real life pictures to show the children the different types. This helps to support children's understanding of healthy lifestyles and increases their vocabulary and knowledge.
- Partnership with parents is excellent. Staff provide regular assessments of the children's progress. Parents comment that, 'Staff are really caring and have always got the children's best interests at heart.' Staff devise 'top tips' for parents on key subjects such as toilet training and communication skills. In addition, there is a well-stocked book library for parents to access. This is highly successful in helping parents further extend children's learning and development at home.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts children's interests first.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY501229
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	10351038
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	0 to 5
Total number of places	25
Number of children on roll	27
Name of registered person	The Watership Down Nursery Ltd
Registered person unique reference number	RP910707
Telephone number	01256895504
Date of previous inspection	1 October 2018

Information about this early years setting

The Watership Down Nursery registered in 2016. It is a privately owned provision and is located in Whitchurch, Hampshire. The nursery is open each weekday from 8am to 5.30pm for 50 weeks of the year. It accepts funding for the early education of children aged two, three and four years. There are nine staff who work with the children. Of these, six hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3. One holds a teaching qualification at level 6.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Lindsay Osman

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the nursery received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the provider and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the provider.
- The owner, manager and inspector completed a learning walk together of the nursery and discussed the early years curriculum.
- Children spoke to the inspector during the inspection.
- 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 carried out a joint observation of an activity with the manager.
- Parents shared their views of the nursery with the inspector.
- The manager showed the inspector documentation to demonstrate the suitability of staff.

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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