

Inspection of Holmwood House Nursery

Holmwood House Nursery, 151 Coach Road, Great Horkesley, Colchester, Essex
CO6 4DY

Inspection date: 14 July 2022

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 enter the nursery happily greeting their friends. They develop lovely relationships with the staff. Children who need reassurance go for cuddles with their key person and quickly settle into their day. Children guide their own learning and choose how they spend their time at nursery. Resources are well planned to ensure that there are items of interest for each child, especially when they first arrive. Children are familiar with the resources and access those that interest them. They engage for long periods and demonstrate their concentration. Children are kind and considerate and enjoy each other's company. They are respectful and behave well. They listen to each other and staff. Transitions to the next room are well thought out and work well for the children. They spend several sessions in the new room alongside their key person, which allows them to get used to their new room with support. Children are confident and enjoy exploring.

Children like to be outside. The outdoor areas are filled with exciting resources and activities. All children have access to a large wooded area. They swing in the hammock and explore the different textures in the environment. Children like to take risks, with staff nearby to support them should they need help. They have the opportunity to be creative and thoroughly enjoy painting outside using twigs and fir cones to make marks.

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

- Staff plan their activities effectively, based on children's interests and what they need to develop in their learning. Each staff member knows their key group very well. Through discussions with parents they focus on the different aspects of each child's learning. Their learning is shared through an online tool so that parents can add their comments. Partnerships with parents are strong. Parents are extremely positive about the nursery and the staff.
- Staff really value children's opinions and listen to them carefully. However, they do not always provide clear guidance and instructions to children. This means that, sometimes, children receive mixed messages about what staff expect of them, for example when it is time for children to sit to have their lunch.
- Children's independence is important. Staff encourage children to manage their needs and to decide when they are thirsty and need to access their drink bottles. Children learn how to use knives to cut their fruit at snack time, under supervision. They manage well and are very pleased with themselves when they successfully cut an apple. Staff help the youngest children to be sociable. They model how to take turns and pair children together to make friends.
- Staff plan to support children's physical skills well. Children strengthen their hand muscles by using lots of malleable materials such as play dough. Babies enjoy using toy hammers to smash ice, developing their strength. Children

demonstrate their dexterity when they thread beads onto string to make a bracelet. Outdoors, children enjoy being adventurous. They move planks around to create bridges to balance on. Children use mathematics independently to compare sizes and count.

- Staff comment on what children are doing and model good, clear pronunciation. Staff read familiar stories to children and they enjoy singing as a group, developing children's language. Babies are visibly excited when they realise that they know the song. Staff are genuinely happy when babies take their first steps at the nursery. They congratulate them and show how much they enjoy being part of their achievements.
- Staff skilfully facilitate children's natural curiosity and extend their learning through exploration. For example, staff acknowledge children's interest and support them to identify the different insects inside a tractor tyre. Children learn about healthy eating, for instance, when they plant and water vegetables at the nursery.
- The leadership in the nursery is very effective. There are good systems which allow staff the time to reflect on their practice and have group discussions about the children. Managers spend time in the rooms and have a very good overview of the quality of practice. Staff feel well supported and can request to access training in areas that interest them, to further develop their skills.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There are robust procedures to ensure that children remain safe. Staff receive regular training on all aspects of safeguarding. Training ensures that staff have the knowledge to recognise the signs of abuse and to understand the reporting procedures. All staff have the local authority contact information close by for easy reference. The designated safeguarding lead provides staff with regular quizzes to test their knowledge and aid discussions. Safer recruitment procedures are followed when employing new staff. There is a good induction process and supervision sessions to monitor ongoing suitability. Staff are vigilant about safety and take the necessary precautions to minimise risks.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- give more precise instructions to children to enable them to understand clearly what they are expected to do and when.

Setting details

Unique reference number	2499293
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10207702
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 2
Total number of places	44
Number of children on roll	58
Name of registered person	Holmwood House Preparatory School Ltd
Registered person unique reference number	2499292
Telephone number	07904264251
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

The nursery registered in 2019. Opening times are from 8am to 6pm, Monday to Friday, all year round, apart from bank holidays. The nursery employs 22 members of childcare staff. Of these, 19 staff hold early years qualifications at levels 2 to 6 and one member of staff holds early years professional status. The nursery also employs a lunchtime assistant.

Information about this inspection

Inspector
Emily Holt

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the provider 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 provider and the inspector completed a learning walk together and discussed the curriculum and what it is that they want the children to learn.
- 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 provider and the inspector carried out a joint observation together.
- Parents shared their views on the setting with the inspector.
- The inspector spoke to children during the inspection.
- 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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