

Inspection of The Cottage Nursery

Alexander Hall, Faringdon Road, Watchfield, Nr Swindon, Wiltshire SN6 8TS

Inspection date: 7 May 2024

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Outstanding**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Good

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children excitedly arrive. They confidently separate from their parents or carers. They are welcomed by kind and attentive staff who know them and their families well. All children are respected as unique individuals. Children's behaviour is exceptional. Children are extremely polite and helpful, and they play in a friendly and inclusive environment. They forge excellent relationships with others. The kindness and consideration shown towards each other are fostered from a very early age. Staff help children to understand the meaning behind the class boundaries and also encourage children to create boundaries. This helps children to make the right choices and ensures they are meaningful to them. Older children recognise the importance of turn-taking, including others in their play and listening to others when speaking in groups.

Staff engage children in purposeful learning experiences, supporting each child to build on their prior knowledge and skills. For example, in the baby room, staff strategically place sensory resources higher to encourage babies to stand and reach up. Older children enjoy a wide range of activities that focus on promoting their communication and early writing skills. For instance, children enjoy painting with water, or they delight in making patterns with various tools in sand and flour. Staff support children to develop a love of stories and songs. Children enjoy favourite stories and 'core' books that are consistently read throughout the nursery. This helps children of all ages to join in with the words and phrases.

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

- Leaders and staff have expertly designed a curriculum to include skills that build on what children know and can do. Staff plan and provide interesting activities that are centred on engaging the children in exploration and discovery. For example, the role play areas capture the children's interests about 'holidays', as they are cleverly transformed into an airport scene. Children delight in packing suitcases and pretending to fly the aeroplane, chatting about what they can see out of the window. Staff positively value the diversity of cultures and languages in the setting and reflect this in the activities and events that they provide.
- Children benefit from a wealth of outdoor experiences, planned to enhance their learning, resilience and curiosity. This provides children with stimulating opportunities to explore the natural world, build on their communication and encourage risk-taking in a safe environment, as well as promote fun adventures and physical activities. Furthermore, many children benefit from valuable learning opportunities, such as forest school sessions, sports coaching and helping in the allotment area.
- Overall, the quality of teaching is good. Staff use a range of teaching styles. They provide meaningful interactions and comment as children play to support

their language. However, at times, staff step in quickly to provide support. This does not give children time to problem-solve and think about how they can achieve what they have set out to do. As a result, children are not always getting the opportunity to use their critical-thinking skills.

- The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) works closely with parents and other professionals to enable children with special educational needs and/or disabilities to make good progress in their learning. The SENCo uses her experience and knowledge to offer support and guidance, and she acts quickly to create tailored plans for children's learning and development. Additional funding is used effectively to close any gaps in children's learning.
- Staff place a great emphasis on promoting children's independence, emotional well-being and self-confidence. Children make independent choices about what they wish to do. Older children are supported to dress themselves and prepare their own snacks and drinks. Effective key-person arrangements ensure that all children are well supported and their individual needs are met.
- Parents speak highly of staff and praise them for their support. Staff strive to build strong relationships and provide support for parents in a variety of ways. For example, parents can access the lending library, book swaps or home-activity bags that include resources for supporting learning at home. Although staff know the children very well, they do not make the strongest possible links with other settings children attend to enable them to share information about their learning.
- Leaders are ambitious and passionate about the nursery. The co-managers are reflective and accurately evaluate all aspects of the provision well. They target areas to develop and source effective training for the staff team. They value their staff team and support both their well-being and professional development. As a result, staff are committed and enthusiastic about the role they play.

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:

- allow more time for children to problem-solve to support them in developing their critical-thinking skills
- review and strengthen the strategies used to build on the communications with other settings that children attend.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY381532
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	10335325
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	0 to 4
Total number of places	85
Number of children on roll	67
Name of registered person	The Cottage Nursery
Registered person unique reference number	RP528490
Telephone number	01793 784109
Date of previous inspection	12 June 2018

Information about this early years setting

The Cottage Nursery registered in 2008. It is located in Watchfield on the Wiltshire/Oxfordshire border. The nursery is open weekdays from 8am until 6pm for 50 weeks of the year. It receives funding for the provision of free early education for children aged two, three and four years. The nursery employs 19 staff, of whom 16 hold relevant qualifications at levels 2, 3 or above. This includes one member of staff who holds qualified teacher status.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Anneliese Fox-Jones

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the setting received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the setting and has taken this into account in their evaluation of the setting.
- The inspector observed activities in the four main base rooms and garden. She talked to staff about the progress individual children are making and what they want the children to learn.
- The co-managers and the inspector completed a learning walk across all areas of the nursery to understand how the early years provision and the curriculum are organised.
- A joint observation was carried out by the inspector and one of the co-managers. The inspector observed interactions between staff and the children and the impact these have on children's learning.
- The inspector checked evidence of the suitability and qualifications of staff working with children.
- The inspector reviewed relevant documentation, including the arrangements for paediatric first-aid training. The inspector had a discussion with leaders about the evaluation of the setting and plans for improvement.
- The inspector spoke to parents and children during the inspection 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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