

Inspection of Early Years @ Highfield - Whitehouse

Early Years At Highfield Whitehouse, Waterford Road, Ipswich IP1 5NW

Inspection date: 23 September 2025

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
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The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Overall effectiveness at previous
inspection

Outstanding

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is outstanding

The curriculum is exceptionally well planned and implemented. Staff plan learning around carefully chosen storybooks that capture children's interests and reflect their home lives. Books provide meaningful opportunities for children to make connections, build emotional literacy and develop the vocabulary to express their feelings. Parents play an active role in curriculum planning and book sharing, which strengthens home learning and ensures consistency for children's learning. Staff are highly attentive to children's needs and adapt the environment to help them make the best progress possible. For example, reducing the number of resources has improved children's concentration and respect for materials, supporting their readiness for school. Play is based around children's individual learning styles and is expertly supported by staff. Children explore objects with deep concentration, solve problems and sustain high levels of engagement. Calming spaces such as a dark den help children to manage their feelings and responses, ensuring they remain settled and ready to learn.

Staff create an environment that fosters independence. Children confidently manage routines, such as washing their hands, buttering crackers and clearing away after meals. Staff promote responsibility, resilience and essential self-care skills. They prepare children exceptionally well for their move on to school. Staff model positive behaviour consistently and embed learning seamlessly into daily routines. They thank children for helping, encourage them to count fruit and engage in meaningful conversations about health and hygiene. As a result, children develop exceptionally strong social skills, early mathematical understanding and healthy habits that will benefit them through life.

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

- Leaders implement the curriculum with passion and communicate a wide range of approaches clearly to staff. As a result, staff confidently implement engaging experiences that excite children and support their learning superbly. Children benefit from consistent, well-planned teaching that builds on their existing skills and knowledge very effectively. This helps children to make exceptional progress.
- Staff work in close partnership with families. They hold regular progress meetings, share activity ideas and offer resources so that children's learning continues at home. This consistent approach strengthens communication, and builds trust. This enables children to experience clear routines and boundaries, both at home and at nursery.
- Leaders evaluate practice rigorously and use innovative approaches to inform improvement through regular observation. Staff also review their own performance, which gives them responsibility for self-evaluation. This reflective

culture strengthens professional confidence and results in consistent, high-quality teaching for children.

- Community links are strengthened through partnerships with charities, local churches and parents' contributions of recipes from home, such as Kurdish dishes. Staff use these activities to broaden children's experiences and help them develop a mature appreciation of tolerance, respect and cultural awareness.
- Staff teach children about effective sustainability practices, such as recycling and using natural resources in the garden. Children learn to care for the environment and assess and manage risk while developing both their physical and problem-solving skills. For example, children work together to build an obstacle course using crates and planks, checking that the structures are stable before balancing on them. They also help to sweep up leaves in the garden and sort clean waste for recycling. Children learn to make decisions collaboratively, and take pride in caring for their surroundings, which builds confidence, independence and resilience.
- Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) make exceptional progress in their communication and developing confidence. Staff source strong and timely support for children with SEND and work closely with all other adults involved in their care. This helps to create a strong team, who are invested in securing the best outcomes for each child.
- Staff are consistent and communicate boundaries clearly. Children are extremely well behaved and know what is expected of them. For example, they share equipment and apologise to peers independently when they accidentally bump into each other. This positive behaviour creates a calm and respectful environment, where children feel safe and valued.
- Staff ensure that diversity and inclusion are thoroughly embedded through the nursery. Children develop respect and understanding for differences in ability, family background and culture. For example, staff introduce Romanian celebrations to broaden children's awareness and strengthen their sense of belonging. Children are very well prepared for life in modern Britain.

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	EY547833
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	10399482
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	2 to 4
Total number of places	28
Number of children on roll	46
Name of registered person	Highfield Children's Centre
Registered person unique reference number	RP526343
Telephone number	01473742534
Date of previous inspection	3 December 2019

Information about this early years setting

Early Years @ Highfield - Whitehouse registered in 2017 and is located in Ipswich. The nursery employs 12 members of childcare staff, including two co-managers. Of these, ten hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 or above, including two at level 6. The nursery opens Monday to Friday, from 8.30am until 5pm, during term time. The nursery offers government funded places for early education for eligible children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Laura Paternoster

Inspection activities

- The manager joined the inspector on a learning walk and talked to the inspector about their curriculum and what they want children to learn.
- Children spoke with the inspector during the inspection.
- The inspector talked to staff at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The inspector spoke with a manager about the leadership and management of the setting.
- Staff spoke to the inspector about how they support children with SEND.
- The inspector observed the quality of education being provided, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact that this was having on children's learning.
- A manager and the inspector carried out a joint observation during snack time.
- 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 working in the nursery.

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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