

Inspection of Valley Farm Nursery School

Valley Farm, Sharrington, HOLT, Norfolk NR24 2PE

Inspection date:

24 September 2025

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

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

Children stroll into this home-from-home nursery with absolute confidence, eager to start their day. Welcomed by the enthusiastic and warm staff, they are quick to settle and keen to explore. Children are incredibly confident in selecting activities. Staff use children's interests to carefully plan experiences that deliver the broad and ambitious curriculum. Children are given the opportunity to practice and embed their current skills, or to explore new ideas. Staff expertly reflect on children's previous learning to help them progress superbly. For example, staff ask children if they can remember what they did before and what they might change now to achieve their goals.

Staff have high expectations of children's behaviour and provide excellent role models, always thanking children for their efforts and actions. As a result, children's own behaviour is superb. They are keen to help each other and take pride in doing so. For example, children enjoy helping others to learn how to wash their hands ready for snack. Children also learn about respecting belongings as staff talk about looking after toys and resources. In response, children have an incredible awareness of the importance of looking after things and will remind each other to tidy toys away, offering to help.

Staff use their deep understanding of child development to build a routine that supports children to grow their independence. For example, from the moment they come into nursery children are given the responsibility to select their peg for the day and self-register. Children become excited at undertaking daily tasks, such as serving snack to each other and sorting recycling. Children are incredibly confident and demonstrate exceptionally positive attitudes to their learning and to each other.

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

- Staff develop an impressively flexible curriculum, specific to the needs of the children attending. They have an exceptional understanding of the importance of knowing each unique child. This wealth of knowledge is used to create a challenging and ambitious curriculum. Staff consider precisely what children already know, what they need to practice and what they should learn next. The curriculum is continually reviewed to guarantee it is progressive and enriches children's learning.
- Interactions between staff and children are incredibly strong. Children's learning thrives due to the skill of staff, who recognise every interaction as an opportunity to teach. Staff reliably use discussions with children to expand their knowledge. For example, when children want to draw rainbows, staff take the opportunity to talk to children about how they are created, learning about reflections and light. As a result, children become curious about learning and are keen to know more.

Staff's thorough knowledge of each child's individual stages of development enables them to skilfully adapt group activities to ensure all children receive the highest quality learning experience.

- Staff have excellent knowledge of supporting children's language skills. Strategies for learning are consistently used to promote development to the highest levels. For example, staff always give children adequate time to respond, enabling them to experience essential back-and-forth conversations. Staff also ensure children are introduced to new and interesting vocabulary in context, such as 'habitat', when exploring the world and learning where animals live.
- Children are given wonderful opportunities to learn. Staff are committed to teaching children about their local community and the wider world. Children are regularly taken on country walks, to learn about the environment and explore nature. They also have access to enriching activities at nursery, including being able to observe the life cycle of tadpoles. Staff recognise that children learn through experiences and use creative ways to cement children's knowledge. For example, children are currently interested in different animals. Staff teach children about animals living in different countries. For example, children are fascinated by the Indian elephant. To help them to truly understand the size of the Indian elephant, staff and children created a life-size image on fabric. Staff talk about how children and staff compare themselves to the height of the image. This allows children to fully appreciate difference in sizes.
- Children's behaviour is excellent. Staff provide a culture of caring and support for each other. They sensitively support children to learn how to self-regulate their emotions. For instance, staff listen, name and validate children's feelings. They also give them tools for the future by discussing with children what they could do to resolve the issue.
- Parent partnerships are particularly strong. Staff regularly communicate children's learning with parents through a variety of methods. Staff share information on child development with parents and offer ideas on how to support home learning. Parents talk about the nursery as being 'very welcoming' and a 'fun space to be'. They also describe it as a 'magical' and a 'special' place. Parents like that the setting supports children's independence and encourages them to recognise their own capabilities. They feel their children are valued as individuals and state that their children have 'thrived' since being at nursery.
- Leaders promote a culture of reflective practice. Staff are supported to expand their knowledge even further through continued training, reading and research. Staff use what they learn to make positive changes to the setting. For example, using learning to reduce sensory stimulation in nursery to further support children's engagement. Staff are incredibly well supported to enhance their professional knowledge and skills.

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	254332
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10399385
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	2 to 4
Total number of places	18
Number of children on roll	18
Name of registered person	Rivett, Claire Elizabeth
Registered person unique reference number	RP903358
Telephone number	01263 861065
Date of previous inspection	29 November 2019

Information about this early years setting

Valley Farm Nursery School registered in 1995. The nursery employs two members of childcare staff. Of these, one holds an appropriate early years qualification at level 5 and one at level 3. The nursery opens four days a week, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday, during term time. Sessions are from 8.30am until 3pm. The nursery provides government funded early education for all eligible children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector
Ali Mitchell

Inspection activities

- The manager and inspector completed a learning walk together of the nursery and discussed the early years curriculum.
- Staff spoke to the inspector during the inspection to share their views.
- The inspector discussed the quality of education being provided, and assessed the impact that this was having on children's learning.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation of a group activity with the manager.
- The inspector spoke to several parents 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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