

Inspection of The Nature Box Forest School

Wood Lane Countryside Centre, Wood Lane, Sheffield, Yorkshire S6 5HE

Inspection date:

15 November 2022

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Not applicable

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is outstanding

Children do very well in the care of the dedicated staff team. They are settled and extremely confident. Children show kindness to each other as they share their resources and help each other to take off their boots and coats. Children behave exceptionally well. Staff are excellent role models and have high expectations for all children.

The inviting and stimulating forest school environment supports children to become fully engaged in meaningful play throughout the day. For example, children collect mud, leaves and stones to create a cake in the mud kitchen. They consider how to transport mud and water from puddles to their areas of play. Staff skilfully question children's actions to find out what they know and understand. As a result, children are making excellent progress in their learning and development, including children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Children's individual needs are supported and strengthened as staff expertly adapt their interactions for each child. For example, when children are not yet ready to play with others, staff offer a reassuring presence, slowly interacting until children are emotionally ready to join in. This helps children to feel safe and secure.

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

- Experienced and highly qualified staff provide a well-structured educational programme that builds on what children already know and can do. For example, after cutting out shapes, children match them with the corresponding shape and size. When eating their lunch, children point out the shapes of their food. They measure the length of sticks against their arms. Children develop excellent mathematical skills in their play.
- The provider has high expectations and works tirelessly to ensure the children have the very best experiences. For example, children enjoy pond dipping and picking fruit and berries in the orchard. They help to spin the honey from the honeycombs before tasting it. Children's experiences are reflected in the setting's ethos, which is, 'We love ourselves, we love each other, we love our world.'
- Children's communication and language development is exceptionally supported by staff. As children describe their tram ride to the library and bus ride back, staff ask children to recall what they did and saw. This is to check their understanding and what they learned. The children excitedly recall the tram driver saying 'hello' over the speaker to them. They retell the story 'The Twelve Unicorns of Christmas', which they read in the library. By the time children leave the nursery, they have made exceptional progress in their speaking and listening skills.

- Children learn to understand the risks in their environment and play. They help to create their own rules and risk assessments. This gives them a greater understanding of the risks, and they then decide how to minimise these. For example, children are aware of their safety around the fire in the community area and of using tools safely. As a result, children learn to manage their own risks to keep themselves safe.
- The provider ensures staff have an excellent knowledge about how they use the forest school approach to support children's confidence and development in all areas of learning. Children are taught to understand their feelings and learn the words to express these. For example, a child says, 'I need my own space now,' when others want to join their play. This teaching of feelings is reflected in the children's exemplary behaviour.
- The special educational needs coordinator is experienced in her role and knowledgeable about the children who require additional support. She works closely with each child's key person, family and agencies to ensure they receive timely interventions and targeted support to meet their development needs.
- Partnership with parents is excellent. The manager and staff ensure parents are fully informed and understand the learning and emotional development that children gain from the forest school environment. Parents are welcome in the provision to see how their children learn. They have regular updates and parent meetings to discuss children's progress and any areas of support needed.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

All staff clearly understand their roles and responsibilities to keep children safe. They have completed a wide variety of safeguarding training. This ensures they are knowledgeable about the signs and symptoms that may indicate a child could be at risk of harm. Staff know who to contact should they have a child protection concern. Comprehensive risk assessments have been carried out by the manager, and detailed daily safety checks are a main priority, due to the outdoor provision. There are 11 staff with a full paediatric first-aid certificate. The site is secure to prevent children from leaving or uninvited people from entering.

Setting details

Unique reference number	2577145
Local authority	Sheffield
Inspection number	10262023
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	2 to 10
Total number of places	52
Number of children on roll	51
Name of registered person	Middleton, Charlotte
Registered person unique reference number	2577144
Telephone number	07790413833
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

The Nature Box Forest School registered in 2020 and is situated in Sheffield. The nursery employs 13 members of childcare staff. Of these, 10 hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 or above, including five at level 6 and one at level 7. The nursery operates from 8am to 5pm, Monday to Friday, all year round, except for bank holidays and Christmas. The nursery offers funded early education to two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Jo Clark

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 manager and the inspector completed a learning walk together to understand how the early years provision and curriculum are organised.
- The inspector made observations throughout the inspection of children's experiences in the setting and assessed the impact that these were having on children's learning.
- Children spoke to the inspector about their experiences in the setting.
- Parents shared their views of the setting with the inspector.
- A meeting was held with the manager. This included a review of relevant documentation, including staff suitability and training.

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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