

Inspection of Little Chestnuts Day Nursery at Thrift Farm

Farm Day Nurseries, Thrift Farm, Buckingham Road, Whaddon, Milton Keynes MK17
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Inspection date: 15 May 2024

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

The nursery's unique setting offers children an abundance of opportunities to learn through first-hand experiences. Children take daily trips out to the farm where they feed animals and play on equipment that helps to boost their physical skills. Children observe magical moments, such as watching lambs being born and chicks hatch. Overall, staff support children's learning well and monitor the good progress they make effectively. This enables them to plan for what children need to learn next and quickly identify if children do not make expected progress. Staff make plans to focus on areas where children need extra support. This ensures that children continue to receive targeted support from staff while they are waiting for professional assessments. There is a strong focus on children's communication and language development. Staff introduce children to new words to expand on their vocabulary. For example, when children play on the pirate ship, staff talk about the 'periscope', 'telescope' and 'treasure maps'.

Children are content and happy at the nursery. They play and learn together well. Children show courtesy and respect for each other. They share and take turns, showing their developing social skills. Staff are good role models for children. If children's behaviour does not meet expectations, staff get to the root cause of this and support children through gentle guidance and encouragement. The nursery is a busy, nurturing environment where all children and families are made to feel welcome.

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

- The curriculum intentions are for children to have new experiences outside of their usual environment. Children explore the natural world and take an interest in herbs, plants, insects and minibeasts. Staff encourage children to learn about diversity and difference, in meaningful ways. Staff's confidence in children's abilities means that they trust children to engage in play that supports them to assess risk and experience challenge. This builds children's confidence and they develop into resilient and capable individuals.
- Although the curriculum intent is clear and concise, the implementation is not embedded securely and consistently across the provision. Some staff are not confident in recognising how they can put the curriculum into action through their teaching. Despite this weakness, children remain excited and motivated to learn, and activities sustain their attention.
- Children's day revolves around being physically active outdoors. There are ample opportunities for all children to test out their physical skills and strengthen their muscles through climbing, balancing, sliding and swinging.
- On regular outings to the farm, staff vigilantly supervise children. Children wear high-visibility vests to be easily identified, and staff carry out head counts and

remind children to remain with the group. Therefore, the trips are well planned and organised to keep children safe and within sight at all times.

- Children show positive attitudes towards their learning. They are courageous at trying new things that push them out of their comfort zone, such as balancing on rope walkways and wooden stepping stones. Children test out their abilities and show tenacity as they explore the world around them.
- All children form close relationships with their key person. Staff adapt the routine to meet young babies' changing needs. They work in partnership with parents to help children to settle at the nursery. Staff make sure that children are well prepared for moving between each room as they grow and for when they eventually leave the nursery and move on to school.
- Safeguarding is highly effective and staff at all levels know their responsibilities in keeping children safe. This includes keeping children safe when they eat and sleep, and taking decisive action if they think children could be at risk of harm.
- The nursery is led by directors and a senior team who genuinely care about putting children first. They invest heavily in staff's welfare and developing their futures. There are extensive measures in place to foster staff's good mental health and well-being. Leaders encourage staff's professional development. Staff are eager to build on their qualifications and undertake formal training. This is hugely beneficial for children as staff expand on their knowledge of how to support children's care and learning.
- Partnerships with parents are strong. Parents take part in coffee mornings and information-sharing events. They explain how this helps them to support their children's progress at home.

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:

- expand staff's confidence in implementing the curriculum for children, so they make clearer connections between the intent of what children need to learn, to enhance their teaching.

Setting details

Unique reference number	2678190
Local authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	10344960
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	74
Number of children on roll	92
Name of registered person	Farm Day Nurseries Ltd
Registered person unique reference number	2678193
Telephone number	01908 643539
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

Little Chestnuts Day Nursery at Thrift Farm registered in 2022 and operates from a building on Thrift Farm, in Whaddon. The nursery employs 27 members of childcare staff. Of these, 16 staff hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 2 and above. The nursery opens from Monday to Friday all year round. Sessions are from 7.30am until 6pm. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Hayley Marshall-Gowen

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 inspector discussed the intent of the curriculum and observed its implementation during activities indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact this had on children's learning.
- A joint observation was completed and discussed with the manager.
- During the inspection, the inspector held a meeting with the manager, senior staff and the director. She looked at relevant documentation, such as evidence of the suitability of staff working in the nursery.
- The inspector spoke with staff and children at suitable times throughout the inspection.
- Parents were invited to share their views with the inspector. Several parents discussed their views during the inspection and the inspector took account of all feedback received.
- The inspector accompanied the children on a trip to the host farm with 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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