

Inspection of Little Barn Owls, The Orchard

The Orchard, Cowfold Road, West Grinstead, Horsham RH13 8LY

Inspection date: 13 August 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

Not applicable

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is outstanding

From a very young age, children learn to be fully independent and to do things for themselves. For example, babies help to chop their own fruit at snack time using safety knives under direct staff supervision. Children develop excellent language and speaking skills. This begins from the outset, where staff narrate what babies are doing and ask simple questions. Staff continually ask questions where older children need to respond with more than one word to express their opinions. Staff reinforce language with simple signing and repeat back correct pronunciation or words. Children choose their play from a young age and make independent choices. This enables them to follow their interests and understand from a very young age that their views are valued and important. Children show immense concentration and persistence at their chosen tasks. This enables them to develop very high levels of control and small muscle development. Staff are highly adept at supporting children, such as through demonstrating and guiding their play and learning.

Children show an exceptional understanding of caring for others, including the animals on site. For example, without prompting, young children pick up the chicken food bowl and put it back in its place, showing their learned knowledge. Children have consistent opportunities to talk about their experiences from their day, for example through reflection sessions. This enables them to share their learning and to understand the rules governing the flow of conversations and respect for others who are talking. Children relish explaining how they assess the risk of their play. They have continual opportunities to take risks in safe surroundings, with staff always nearby to challenge learning and maintain safety. For example, children learn to climb onto the large tractor tyres showing a clear sequence of skills developed over time. They understand the risks in their play and how to minimise these with confidence and exceptional ease. This confirms how this is something that staff embed in practice from the start.

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

- There is a clear and extremely effective leadership hierarchy, which helps the overall daily operations of the setting run smoothly and appear effortless. This creates an environment that is completely calm, where staff understand their individual roles and children flourish and thrive.
- Leaders demonstrate to staff how to further improve the high-quality interactions with children to extend language. For example, they sit with staff, such as at the snack table, showing a baby how to use the knife to spread the butter on the cracker from top to bottom. As they do so, leaders use language to increase staff's knowledge and children's vocabulary.
- There is an extremely clear and ambitious plan for the curriculum that is

exceptionally thought-provoking and challenging for all children. This includes those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those learning English as an additional language. Leaders ensure that staff plan activities and experiences that children can fully immerse themselves in. These follow children's interests, and staff seamlessly weave into the experiences what they know children need to learn next. This means that all children make exceptional progress in their learning.

- Leaders have an excellent understanding of how to assess the quality of interactions and to support staff to excel in their professionalism. Staff also assess each other's interactions with children to improve practice even further and to help develop finely honed professional skills.
- Staff have an extremely in-depth knowledge of not only their key children but all children attending. This enables them to make the most of each and every interaction with children to challenge their learning even further. Staff continually and consistently observe and assess children's development. They promptly identify any potential emerging gaps in learning and plan effectively for what children need to learn next. In turn, this supports children to make rapid progress from their starting points.
- Partnerships with parents are exceptional. Leaders and staff work tirelessly to build and maintain the relationships. Parents report that they go 'above and beyond' and that they focus on the family as a whole, giving guidance and support that parents fully appreciate. Parents comment that their children develop excellent levels of social skills and communication and language development is very strong.
- Leaders have a highly effective training programme in place for staff. This completely empowers staff to have ownership of their professional development. Consequently, this enhances their knowledge and confidence to excellent levels, having a significant impact on the care and learning outcomes for children.
- There are extremely high levels of support for staff's welfare and well-being. Staff consistently report that they receive well-targeted and individualised guidance, enabling them to be constantly focused on their roles and responsibilities. They comment that leaders 'genuinely care about staff' and that they know each staff member as an individual. This creates an environment where staff work cohesively as a team and where staff retention is excellent. Therefore, consistency for children and their families is highly evident.

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	2745026
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	10408348
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	0 to 4
Total number of places	64
Number of children on roll	146
Name of registered person	Little Barn Owls Ltd
Registered person unique reference number	RP535122
Telephone number	01403916501
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

Little Barn Owls, The Orchard registered in 2023. It is located in the West Grinstead, West Sussex. The nursery is open 51 weeks of the year, each weekday from 7.30am to 6pm. The nursery is in receipt of funding for the provision of early education for children aged two, three and four. It follows the Reggio Emilia approach to education. The nursery employees 23 staff and of these working with the children, 14 staff hold relevant early years qualifications.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Helen Penticost

Inspection activities

- The operations manager, manager and inspector completed a learning walk together and discussed the early years curriculum.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation with the manager.
- The inspector spoke with staff and interacted with children.
- Parents shared their views about the setting with the inspector.
- The inspector viewed the provision and discussed the safety and suitability of the premises.

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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