

Inspection of Polka Dot Farm

The Outlet, Tye Common Road, Billericay, Essex CM12 9SD

Inspection date: 13 March 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	Not applicable

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is outstanding

Children from babies upwards are extremely keen and excited learners. They thrive on exploring and investigating the farm environment, superbly supported by positive and enthusiastic staff. Children confidently guide much of their own learning as they explore the resources. Staff are extremely knowledgeable about the nursery's bespoke curriculum, based around various farm animals. They deliver teaching to an exceptionally high standard across the nursery. As a result, children are provided with extremely effective learning opportunities, which help them to become strong, confident and inquisitive learners.

Children are extremely well behaved and understand the nursery boundaries and routines. When going for walks outside of the nursery, they follow staff's clear instructions and know to wait for their friends. They understand the importance of the safety rules and repeat them to staff to show their understanding. Staff have high expectations of the children, and key persons know the children in their key groups exceptionally well. They have robust plans for each child's learning journey, based around the children's interests. Children excitedly hunt for treasure as they explore the fields surrounding the nursery during a planned walk. Their excitement concludes in an experiment where the various treasures, or ingredients, are mixed to create a foaming potion, causing great excitement and wonder.

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

- The nursery is led and managed by an extremely effective management team, which includes the providers, who are on site most days. Strong and effective leaders continuously review and reflect on the provision. They make collective decisions about changes that will improve and enhance all aspects of the nursery. Staff are extremely well supported through effective incentives and by being valued. They are provided with superb opportunities to develop self-confidence in order to be strong and effective practitioners.
- Leaders work with a wide range of other professionals to support families attending the nursery. For example, they have links with specialists in speech and language, physiotherapy, nutrition, and health and safety. Staff signpost parents to the support available to them. Extra-curricular activities are brought into the nursery to enhance the children's learning. For example, children enjoy activities based around rhythm and dance as well as early literature and phonics.
- Parents speak extremely positively about their child's nursery experiences at Polka Dot Farm. They cannot speak highly enough about the dedicated and individual care and attention their children receive from the staff. They are extremely happy with the extra-curricular activities provided for their children and comment that they believe these are contributing to their children making exceptional progress in their learning and development.

- Staff use their expert knowledge of how children learn to deliver all aspects of the well-considered curriculum. They focus highly on children being able to communicate their needs effectively. From a very early age, babies use signs alongside speech to help them to communicate. As children grow and develop, the staff working with them use clear, pertinent and effective questioning to extend the children's thinking.
- Staff invite parents into the setting to share stories in their home language. As a result, children benefit from learning about different languages spoken. They also learn how different cultures are valued. This promotes a respectful attitude, enabling children to embrace and appreciate the diverse cultures within their community.
- Babies are highly motivated and show great enthusiasm in the meaningful learning opportunities. They are able to make connections in their play as they match the toy farm animals with the animal pictures they see in the books they read. In addition, staff skilfully encourage children to practise the sounds the animals make.
- Staff plan exciting activities that build on what children know and need to learn next. For example, children explore how water freezes. Together they discuss how the 'liquid' has changed into ice. Children are highly engaged and demonstrate excellent levels of concentration as they use a range of tools to smash the ice. Staff embrace children's curiosity and develop their critical thinking skills extremely well.

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	2757564
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10379642
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	1 to 5
Total number of places	104
Number of children on roll	197
Name of registered person	Polka Dot Childcare Limited
Registered person unique reference number	2757565
Telephone number	01277563439
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

Polka Dot Farm registered in 2023. The nursery employs 43 members of childcare staff. Of these, 29 hold appropriate early years qualifications. The nursery is open from 7am to 7pm, Monday to Friday, for 51 weeks of the year. The nursery provides government funded early years education for all eligible children.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors

Lynn Hughes
Tina Mason

Inspection activities

- The inspectors viewed the provision and discussed the safety and suitability of the premises.
- The manager and room leaders joined the inspector on a learning walk and talked about their curriculum and what they want the children to learn.
- The children spoke to the inspectors during the inspection.
- The inspectors spoke to staff at appropriate times and took account of their views.
- The inspectors observed the quality of education being provided, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact that this was having on children's learning.
- The inspector and the manager carried out a joint observation of an activity.
- Parents and carers shared their views of the nursery with the inspectors.
- The manager showed the inspectors documentation to demonstrate the suitability of 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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