

Inspection of Highfield Pre-School

YWAM Oval, Ambrose Lane, Harpenden, Hertfordshire AL5 4BX

Inspection date:

18 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 quickly develop a real love of learning at this extremely warm, welcoming and homely setting. They know what is coming next and this helps them to feel safe and secure. Children follow the setting's routines instinctively, embracing its values. For example, during morning 'devotion time', staff and children enthusiastically sing together. Watching their enjoyment at this special time is a delight. Children feel a very strong sense of belonging and know they are valued. They are given choices so that they can decide what they would like to sing or read. Staff listen carefully to children, continually immersing them in meaningful conversation. They ask children open-ended questions and allow them the time they need to think and to respond. All children are becoming confident communicators, learning new and exciting words every day.

Staff teach an ambitious and sequential curriculum. Staff know children extremely well. Their accurate assessments of every child's starting points and understanding of what they already know and can do, enables them to skilfully plan and provide activities that continually extend children's learning and challenges their thinking. The curriculum is taught through themes. Staff weave different areas of learning together to great effect, igniting children's curiosity. For example, children learn about different materials as they explore paper through craft activities, recycling tasks and ripping and tearing paper. Children show high levels of engagement and benefit from quality interactions with staff. Children's knowledge and skills develop securely and rapidly, as a result.

Staff are excellent role models. They consistently demonstrate high expectations of children's behaviour. This, along with a culture of respect, kindness and a love of learning, means that children form very positive relationships, both with staff and their peers. Children's behaviour is exemplary.

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

- Leaders, managers and staff work closely together to ensure all children are able to make the best possible progress. They go above and beyond to ensure eligible children receive their entitlement to any additional funding. This is used very effectively to provide carefully planned and tailored support for individual children. In doing so, staff work closely with many early years professionals. This helps to ensure the skills and strategies they adopt have the desired impact on children's learning. Children make excellent progress towards their specific and individual targets as a result.
- Children are provided with plentiful opportunities and space to explore, be curious and develop their gross motor skills. For example, through imaginative play, children build roads and bridges together. They use a large sandpit to sieve

and pour sand. During activities such as this, children take advantage of the many opportunities they have to climb, hang and swing on the outdoor equipment. They play cooperatively, are excited and fully immersed in their play and learning.

- Staff ensure that children develop good personal care habits and learn how to lead a healthy lifestyles. Daily routines, that are well taught and embedded, help to do this successfully. For example, children learn how to wash their hands properly. They eat healthy and nutritious lunches. Staff teach children the importance of staying hydrated and exercising to keep their bodies fit and healthy. Children are active and energetic during planned physical sessions, where they learn to negotiate space, jump with two feet and move their bodies in different ways.
- Partnerships with parents are extremely positive. Right from the outset, parents are kept well informed. An online welcome meeting, for example, enables them to find out what their children will learn and how they can support learning further at home. Parents speak very highly of the setting's warm and welcoming atmosphere. They appreciate that knowledgeable staff help their children to settle in quickly and build secure attachments. Through regular feedback and conversations, parents are kept fully up to date with their children's progress. Parents particularly appreciate the positive impact the setting has on their children's behaviour and language development.
- Staff's approach to teaching is highly child centered. They use every moment as a learning opportunity, always ensuring children are happy and having fun. Developing children's emotional well-being is a notable strength. Staff are highly inclusive. They continually celebrate and praise each child's individual achievements. This gives all children an immense sense of pride. Children consistently demonstrate positive attitudes towards learning and are very well prepared for the next stage of education as a result.
- Leaders and managers are dedicated professionals, passionate about the quality of care and education they provide. They share a wealth of experience and knowledge about child development. They continually reflect on and evaluate the quality of the setting's provision and impact on children's learning. They use their findings astutely to seek out and provide professional development opportunities that will enhance the quality of education and support children and their families even further.

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	EY306881
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10408226
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register
Day care type	Sessional day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	2 to 4
Total number of places	40
Number of children on roll	32
Name of registered person	Kingdom Education Limited
Registered person unique reference number	RP525533
Telephone number	01582 320566
Date of previous inspection	28 January 2020

Information about this early years setting

Highfield Pre-School registered in 2001. The pre-school employs nine members of childcare staff. Of these, seven hold early years qualifications at level 3 or above, and the provider holds early years professional status. The pre-school opens from Monday to Friday during school term times. Sessions are from 9am to 3pm. The pre-school provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Sara Vincent

Inspection activities

- The manager joined the inspector on a learning walk and talked to the inspector about their curriculum and what they want their children to learn.
- Children told the inspector about their friends and what they like to do when they are at pre-school.
- The inspector talked to staff at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their views.
- Leaders and managers spoke to the inspector about how they support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The inspector observed the quality of education being provided, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact that this was having on children's learning.
- The inspector carried out joint observations of group activities with the manager.
- The inspector spoke to several parents during the inspection and took account of their views.

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.

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk

This publication is available at <https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2025