

Inspection of Little Footprints Day Nursery

Thundersley Junior & Infant School, 2 Dark Lane, BENFLEET, Essex SS7 3PT

Inspection date: 29 July 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 thrive in this highly engaging family-focused nursery that prioritises children's language development and emotional well-being. The well-planned curriculum is broad, ambitious and consistently implemented across all age groups. Staff interactions are warm and responsive and help children to feel emotionally secure. There is a firm commitment to helping children recognise feelings and emotions. Staff use emotional language consistently when speaking to children. This helps children to be able to effectively express how they feel in a range of situations.

Behaviour is exemplary. Staff act as exceptional role models, clearly demonstrating their expectations. Ongoing praise and acknowledgement of children's efforts help to build positive attitudes to learning. Consequently, children are highly motivated and demonstrate deep engagement in their play and learning. Children are supported to be independent by patient staff. They approach challenges, such as putting on shoes, with determined confidence.

Children show strong attachments to staff. The robust arrangements for transitions and an effective key-person approach ensure that children settle quickly into their new environments. This extends to when they move on to school. Staff ensure children are well prepared through open discussions, visits and role-play activities. As a result, children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), are superbly prepared for the next stage in their education.

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

- Children benefit from a highly stimulating and language-rich environment. Staff demonstrate expert communication and interactions with children. Interactive discussions and meaningful conversations help children develop extensive vocabulary. Mystery boxes in each room encourage curiosity as children explore the contents. This prompts children to engage in speaking and listening as they describe, for example, how lavender smells. Children learn to use signs alongside spoken words which further promotes their rapid acquisition of language.
- Children's well-being is exquisitely fostered. Staff use a consistent language of colours to help children identify and express their feelings. For example, children express how they feel happy through the colour yellow. This approach helps children, including those with SEND, to recognise and respond to a range of feelings. The emotionally literate environment supports children to develop kindness and resilience.
- Children with SEND are given every opportunity to make the progress they are capable of. Extremely knowledgeable specialist staff have a clear and in-depth

understanding of the individual needs of children. Exceptionally strong partnerships with parents and external professionals, enhance the quality and consistency of care. Leaders demonstrate high expectations and a commitment to achieving the very best outcomes for all children.

- Older children become wholly absorbed in classic fairy tales. Staff expertly bring the stories to life through role play and puppets. They use prior experiences, such as visits to the woods, to help children relate to the forest setting in the story. Children make marks on the playground using sparkly water, developing early writing skills.
- The curriculum actively promotes equality and diversity. Children explore identity through self-portraits. This helps them to build a positive sense of self. Family albums are used to celebrate the diversity of home life, including different family structures. This supports the development of empathy, understanding and a strong sense of belonging.
- The curriculum extends beyond the nursery through home-learning opportunities. Children collect autumn treasure and take part in beach scavenger hunts with their families. Children's understanding of the world is enriched through meaningful experiences. Visits to a local care home and café support children's awareness of the community.
- Staff are wonderfully attuned to individual children's needs. They offer support where required. For example, they help children to correctly identify number positions on a number line. Staff skilfully use spontaneous moments to promote rich learning. For instance when water spills, staff make footprints, directing learning to size and pattern.
- Parents speak incredibly highly of the nursery. They express absolute trust in the family oriented warm and nurturing care. Parents say that the nursery personally invests in their children. They say that children are thriving and that they feel included, informed and valued.
- Leaders have an honest and accurate understanding of the strengths and areas for development within the nursery. A culture of meticulous continuous improvement is evident, with a sharp focus on self-evaluation. This helps leaders to monitor progress and continuously evaluate the quality of provision.

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	EY447924
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10398765
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	70
Number of children on roll	114
Name of registered person	Little Footprints Limited
Registered person unique reference number	RP531672
Telephone number	01268795577
Date of previous inspection	7 November 2019

Information about this early years setting

Little Footprints Day Nursery registered in 2012. The nursery employs 29 members of childcare staff. Of these, one holds an appropriate early years qualification at level 5, 18 staff hold a qualification at level 3 and one holds a qualification at level 2. The nursery opens from Monday to Friday, all year round. Opening times are from 7am until 7pm. The nursery provides funded early education for all eligible children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector
Clare Ford

Inspection activities

- The manager joined the inspector for a learning walk and discussed their curriculum and what they want their children to learn.
- The inspector observed the quality of teaching and interactions both inside and outdoors.
- Parents shared their views with the inspector and their views were taken into account.
- The inspector talked to staff at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their views.
- Staff spoke to the inspector about how they support children with SEND.

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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