

Inspection of Circle Centre

The Old School, Middle Claydon, Buckingham MK18 2ET

Inspection date:

14 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

Leaders have a deep commitment to maintaining an extremely high-quality provision and for continuous improvement. There is highly effective reflective practice in place. All leaders and staff undertake this to keep striving for the best they can offer to the children and families.

The nursery only offers care and education for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). More specifically, they care for autistic children or those with sensory, communication and interaction differences. The recognition for the uniqueness of each child is inspiring, and children thrive in the nursery. The nursery provides very holistic support for children and their families. They help parents and carers with strategies to support their children and interact with them at home. Leaders provide advice to ensure families receive all of their entitlements and benefits.

Leaders and staff provide a very calm, purposeful and enabling environment for children. The design of this has their very specific needs in mind. Children are curious and eager to explore. Staff support each of them on a one-to-one basis. This supports children to engage to differing degrees in planned routines and activities and learn to transition between these. Children also lead their play and interactions and are enabled to make choices.

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

- Leaders have created a very unique curriculum, designed to meet the needs of the children who attend. This is well sequenced and extremely ambitious, although flexible. Research underpins the curriculum, alongside the shared knowledge and experiences of the neurodivergent community. The curriculum is embedded throughout the nursery, with staff implementing this exceptionally well. This enables all children to make the progress they are capable of in a dedicated provision.
- Leaders and staff use highly effective and varied methods to support children's ability to communicate and develop language and to advocate for themselves. They are highly respectful of children's communication preferences. All staff carry and use pictorial and visual aids so children can select these and share their wants and needs. For example, this helps children to communicate when they need to ask for space away from other children. There are also visual timetables and timelines for children to help them process the nursery day. These strategies support all children to feel valued and heard, even if they are not yet verbal.
- Leaders and staff are incredibly passionate. They go above and beyond to provide rich and appropriate experiences for the children at the nursery,

considering their individual needs and challenges. Leaders and staff design routines to meet the individual needs of children. They access an initial choosing activity, which is child led and supports children to regulate and transition into the nursery day. Some children choose sensory activities in the garden, while others choose to bounce on the trampoline. This helps children to develop their self-regulation skills and manage transitions.

- Practice is always evolving. Recently leaders and staff have been considering how children's energy levels can impact on their ability to regulate, based on research. They recognise some children find it very stressful trying to label their emotions and know there are other ways to support their understanding of feelings. This ensures children are able to understand and learn in ways most suited to them.
- The staff team all attend a valuable morning briefing to share pertinent information. They receive updates on the children attending that day and any changes to their current needs. This supports staff to be ready for the session, understand expectations and understand how to best support those attending that day.
- Leaders and staff are extremely knowledgeable and experienced. Their interactions with children are highly effective. They model activities and play to children without any expectations for children's responses. There is no expectation for children to get involved unless they choose to. Staff know how to tailor these interactions very successfully to meet children's unique learning needs. This enables children to engage in play and activities when they feel ready to.
- There is a highly effective key-person approach in place, as well as a multidisciplinary focus. All children are allocated a specialist teacher and a key person. Children also benefit greatly from input from the occupational therapist and speech and language therapist. Although children are allocated a one to one each session, this is rotated so all staff get to know all children. They always have some of their sessions each week with their key person. Key people are responsible for working towards children's unique and individual targets to ensure they make rapid progress and are ready for the progression to school.

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	EY462850
Local authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	10398383
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	2 to 5
Total number of places	10
Number of children on roll	20
Name of registered person	Autism Early Support Trust Limited
Registered person unique reference number	RP901959
Telephone number	01296 733900
Date of previous inspection	17 October 2019

Information about this early years setting

Circle Centre registered in 2013 and operates from a school house in Middle Claydon, Buckinghamshire. The nursery provides care for autistic children and those with communication differences. The nursery employs 16 members of childcare staff. Of these, 11 hold appropriate early years qualifications, including five staff who are qualified teachers. The nursery opens from Monday to Friday, during term time, with various session times. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector
Clare Perry

Inspection activities

- The specialist teacher and inspector completed a learning walk together of all areas of the nursery and discussed the early years curriculum.
- 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.
- 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 specialist teacher and inspector carried out observations together throughout the inspection.
- Parents and carers shared their views of the setting with the inspector.
- The inspector looked at relevant documentation and reviewed evidence of the suitability of staff working in the nursery.

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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