

Inspection of Ludwell Valley Centre

Ludwell Valley Centre, Ludwell Lane, EXETER EX2 5LU

Inspection date:

23 June 2025

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Good

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision requires improvement

Children arrive happily, excited for their day ahead. Staff greet parents and children warmly. Children have formed positive relationships with staff, who know them well. Staff plan their curriculum around what they want children to learn and their interests. For instance, painting is available everyday to help children develop their hand-eye coordination and to help them settle quickly. However, the quality of teaching is variable and does not consistently build on children's next steps in learning. Leaders do not coach and support staff well enough to ensure children make the progress they are capable of. Additionally, some quieter children do not receive interactions from staff for periods of time, and they play alone.

Staff support children's independence skills well. Children learn to drink from an open cup and learn how to use cutlery, such as a spoon. Staff teach children how to use safety knives to cut up different fruit. Younger children receive support where staff place their hand over the child's hand to guide them. Older children competently do this for themselves. They show pride in their achievements, showing staff their accomplishments. Children learn to share the one-handed tools with older children, role modelling to their younger peers.

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

- Staff understand children's needs and use these to design their curriculum. For example, during adult-led sessions, staff engage children well, such as during story times. Children use props to retell familiar stories and join in with repeated refrains. However, leaders do not effectively coach and support staff to improve the implementation of the curriculum, particularly during free-play activities. Some staff do not provide appropriate challenges to build on children's existing knowledge and skills. Children often flit between activities, particularly when outdoors.
- Children enjoy engaging in a 'bug hunt'. Staff print off pictures of different insects and encourage children to find these in the outdoor area. Children excitably place their pictures on clipboards and tick the box next to the insects when they see them. Staff talk to children about what they have found, such as butterflies and ladybirds. However, at times, staff do not provide interactions to children who play with other activities. Although contented, these children go unnoticed without engagement from staff.
- Parent partnerships are effective. Parents comment on how the setting provides them with frequent information about their child's progress and ideas to work on at home. They say that the setting provides consistent support to them as a family and how children have formed strong connections with staff. Parents report on how staff support children to try new foods to benefit their health.
- Staff implement some large-group activities, where children can practise their

skills. For instance, children learn how to use orange juicers and lemon squeezers. Staff show children how to use these and children copy afterwards. Children persevere as they push and twist the oranges onto the juicer, helping to support their hand-eye coordination. Children then pour the juice into a cup and have a taste. Staff ask whether it tastes 'sweet' or 'sour'. Children ask questions about why the cucumber does not produce much 'juice'. Staff explain that the water is in the cucumber skin, which is difficult to squeeze.

- Leaders and staff attend training to keep their knowledge updated to benefit children. They implement 'communication sheets' to enable children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to point at pictures to convey their wants and needs. Overall, staff provide children with support to manage their emotions, although this is not consistently effective, and some children quickly become angry and upset.
- Staff work closely with other professionals and liaise well with the local school. They talk to Reception teachers about expectations for when children move on to primary education. For instance, staff encourage children to develop key skills, such as using scissors and being able to put on their own coats and shoes. Staff also help children to recognise the initial letters of their name to support their literacy skills.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts children's interests first.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

To meet the requirements of the early years foundation stage, the provider must:

	Due date
improve the implementation of the curriculum, particularly during free play activities, so it is consistently ambitious to help children make the progress of which they are capable	25/07/2025
ensure children receive consistent interactions and engagement to support their overall development	25/07/2025
support and coach staff more effectively to ensure learning and development experiences for children improve.	25/07/2025

To further improve the quality of the early years provision, the provider should:

- help children manage their feelings more effectively to further support their emotional development.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY482440
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	10399315
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	28
Number of children on roll	40
Name of registered person	Ludwell Valley Early Childhood Centre Committee
Registered person unique reference number	RP517847
Telephone number	07948 617237
Date of previous inspection	27 November 2019

Information about this early years setting

Ludwell Valley Centre first registered in 1996 and moved to its current premises in 2014. It is located in the Wonford area of Exeter, Devon. The pre-school is open Monday to Friday, from 9am to 3.30pm, term time only. There are six members of staff. Three staff members hold level 3 qualifications and three staff have level 2 qualifications. The setting provides government funded places for childcare and also receives specific funding for disadvantaged children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Joanne Steward

Inspection activities

- The manager and inspector completed a learning walk together of all areas of the pre-school and discussed the early years curriculum.
- Children told the inspector about their friends and what they like to do when they are at pre-school.
- 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 a joint observation of a group activity with the manager.
- Parents 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 pre-school.

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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