

Inspection of Elmscot Day Nursery and Nursery School (Chester)

Egerton Street, Chester, Cheshire CH1 3ND

Inspection date: 27 April 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not applicable

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children adapt well to changes in routines, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. They wave their parents off at the door and skip into the nursery with excitement. They confidently greet the inspector and inform him that they 'love nursery'. Children are happy and safe at this vibrant setting. Their laughter fills the air as they play, and they develop close bonds with staff. Children are proud of who they are and where they come from. They talk about what makes them unique, such as their skin and hair colour. Children are keen to take on new challenges, such as learning how to negotiate their balancing skills during an assault course. Overall, children behave well and show positive attitudes towards their learning. However, sometimes, staff do not provide children with clear messages about their behaviour.

Babies enjoy looking at their reflections in low-level mirrors. They move their bodies to music and giggle with delight while exploring cornflour. Toddlers make 'birthday cakes' from dough and fascinate while caring for wildlife. They excitedly talk about the 'bug hotel' and discuss how many legs spiders have. Pre-school children attempt to write their names and enjoy playing with toy sea life creatures. Children develop the necessary skills in readiness for their move on to school.

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

- The manager exhibits strong leadership skills and aspires for the nursery to be outstanding. She includes the views of parents, staff and children in self-evaluation. The manager correctly identifies areas for improvement and is relentless in her determination to bring about change.
- Overall, children access a sequence of learning that builds on what they know and can do. Assessment arrangements are good and gaps in learning close. Sometimes, staff do not provide older children with higher levels of challenge in their learning.
- Partnership working is strong. Parents comment that they 'could not have chosen a better place' for their children to learn. They attend parent evenings and receive daily updates about their children's time at the nursery. Links with the local community and external professionals are built on trust and respect.
- Staff share a love of reading with children. They bring stories to life through role play and animation. Children relish these moments and beam with delight while enacting roles of superheroes. They sit quietly with their friends looking at their favourite stories and talk about which characters are special to them.
- Care practices are good. Staff spend time getting to know children and their families during the settling-in period. Children develop secure relationships with staff and show a strong sense of belonging. Overall, they have positive attitudes to their learning and generally behave well. At times, staff do not provide children with clear messages about their behaviour.

- Staff promote children's physical development very well. They focus on supporting children's large-muscle development through activities, such as yoga. Children enjoy taking part in these lessons and show good coordination as they learn new movements.
- Leaders give high priority to staff well-being. Staff receive rewards for their achievements and these are celebrated across the nursery. Staff attend training, supervision sessions and appraisal meetings. That said, leaders have not fully established a highly effective programme of professional development, to help raise staff practice to a higher level.
- The support in place for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language is excellent. The manager ensures barriers to learning are removed and all children receive the support they need to succeed. Intervention plans are monitored with rigour and all children make good progress.
- Children in receipt of additional funding make good progress. Leaders provide them with visits to places that they would not usually experience. These include trips to local nature reserves to learn about den building and camping. Children use these skills back at the nursery and become enthralled while making a pretend fire for camping.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The premises are safe, secure and suitable for childcare. Robust risk assessments are in place and staff supervise children with vigilance. Ratios are met and leaders deploy staff well. Accidents are dealt with effectively and staff are trained in first aid. Staff attend safeguarding training and receive updates about changes in legislation. They have a good understanding of child protection and know the referral procedure. Recruitment and vetting processes are secure. All staff undergo stringent checks to ensure that they are suitable to work with children. Leaders know about safeguarding issues, such as breast ironing and county lines.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- strengthen the curriculum for older children, to provide them with further challenge in their learning
- better support staff to consistently provide children with clear messages about their behaviour
- refine the programme of professional development, to raise staff practice to a higher level.

Setting details

Unique reference number	2496657
Local authority	Cheshire West and Chester
Inspection number	10231596
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	0 to 4
Total number of places	90
Number of children on roll	71
Name of registered person	Elmscot Group Limited
Registered person unique reference number	RP910343
Telephone number	01244346456
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

Elmscot Day Nursery and Nursery School (Chester) registered in 2018. The nursery employs 13 members of childcare staff. Of these, eight hold recognised early years qualifications at level 2 and above. The nursery opens from Monday to Friday, all year round. Sessions are from 7.30am until 6pm. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Luke Heaney

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the provider received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the provider and has taken that into account in his evaluation.
- The manager and the inspector completed a learning walk.
- The inspector observed the interactions between staff and children throughout the day and evaluated the impact these had on children's learning.
- A joint observation was carried out by the inspector and the manager.
- The inspector held discussions with the leadership team, staff and children at appropriate times during the inspection.
- Relevant documentation was reviewed by the inspector, including evidence of the suitability and training of staff.
- The inspector obtained the views of parents through discussions.

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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