

Inspection of Nature Nursery

Joan Elliot Visitor Centre, Abbotts Hall Farm, Maldon Road, Great Wigborough,
COLCHESTER CO5 7RZ

Inspection date: 15 May 2023

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Overall effectiveness at previous
inspection

Not applicable

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is outstanding

Children are flourishing at this idyllic outdoor nursery. They arrive full of enthusiasm, ready for a day of natural wonder. Children develop secure bonds with adults. They seek out their key person and excitedly engage in animated discussions. Children demonstrate high levels of confidence. They explain how they play in the different areas, independently organising the space and transporting materials as they choose. As the day begins, children fill containers with water from a tap and transport this to the water tray ready to play and explore.

Leaders have designed an incredibly ambitious curriculum where children make exceptional progress in their learning. Children access inspiring play spaces that develop their curiosity and wonder. For example, in the mud kitchen, they make 'seed bombs', crushing dried flowers and mixing the seeds with clay and compost. Children grow fruits and vegetables and learn about the impact of light and darkness on growing plants.

Children are becoming expert mathematicians. They organise tea parties, counting out four places with plates, cups and food. Children weigh ingredients in the mud kitchen and measure quantities in the 'potion station'. In the meadow, they use magnifying glasses to search for bugs in the tall grass and under logs. Children remember that insects need safe places to hide and should stay cool in the sun. They are becoming considerate citizens who care for their world.

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

- Children are nurtured to develop strong emotional well-being. Adults provide opportunities to develop and strengthen children's confidence and resilience. For example, they provide consistent encouragement and praise as children experience new things. Children learn about positive choices. They become 'mighty oaks' as they collectively celebrate good listening, achievements and kindness. Children are supported to understand and manage their own wants and needs. For example, if they feel tired, they can take a nap in the tent.
- Highly skilled staff use their secure knowledge of their key children to provide challenging and ambitious next steps in learning. For instance, children practise peeling fruits and vegetables to help to support long-term skills such as whittling.
- Children are becoming proficient in their use of English. Adults invest a great deal of time in holding meaningful conversations with children. Children share a story with an adult about a tractor. They describe the pictures and contribute their own ideas and experiences. Adults constantly add vocabulary as children play. They describe sand as 'fluffy' and introduce words such as 'dome' to describe children's sculptures. Children's experiences further extend their

vocabulary. For example, they correctly identify, name and describe birds, such as red kites, that fly overhead.

- Children are developing deep knowledge about the natural world. They use all their senses as they engage with nature. Children enjoy standing on 'the mount' and feeling the wind direction. They predict when it might rain and know how to stay cool in warmer weather. In the wooded area, children enjoy swinging in hammocks. They listen to birdsong and name the birds. Children show respect for the environment and all living things.
- Children repeat activities, practising new skills, and apply learning to their play. For example, they build upon their current understanding of water to develop new ways of channelling and transporting it through chutes. Furthermore, adults use sharply focused, open-ended questioning to support children's critical thinking and reasoning skills. As a result, children are consistently broadening and deepening their knowledge.
- The highly ambitious and passionate manager has high expectations for all children. She uses her exceptional knowledge and skill to drive improvements and seek new ways to support children and their families. Meticulous self-evaluation, reflective practice and sharply focused staff development ensure constant improvements to the already superb curriculum.
- Staff well-being is a priority for all. Leaders are supported by the Essex Wildlife Trust to maintain a positive work-life balance. This also ensures that leaders provide effective support for their staff.
- Parents speak highly of the setting. They praise staff for their kindness and the exceptional confidence children develop. Parents describe Nature Nursery as 'an environment for children to not only learn and thrive but still be children'. They comment on having peace of mind that their children thrive at this wonderful nursery.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong safeguarding culture across the nursery. Leaders ensure that all staff receive regular training and updates in child protection. Staff show a secure understanding of their responsibilities in keeping children safe. This includes having sound knowledge of the indicators of abuse, including broader topics such as female genital mutilation and county lines. Leaders and staff are clear about the need to raise concerns swiftly, including how to whistle-blow. Arrangements for children's intimate care routines protect their privacy. Electronic devices are restricted to those used by staff for recording observations. In addition, there is a strict 'no-device' policy within the toilet and nappy changing area.

Setting details

Unique reference number	2625014
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10286055
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	2 to 4
Total number of places	30
Number of children on roll	41
Name of registered person	Essex Wildlife Trust Limited
Registered person unique reference number	2625013
Telephone number	07730217262
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

Nature Nursery registered in 2021 and is located in Great Wigborough, Colchester. It is an outdoor nursery operated by The Essex Wildlife Trust Ltd. The nursery employs eight members of childcare staff. Of these, five hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 6 and three hold level 3. The nursery opens from Monday to Friday, all year round. Sessions are from 8am until 5.30pm. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Clare Ford

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 their evaluation of the provider.
- The manager joined the inspector on a learning walk and talked to the inspector about their curriculum and what they want children to learn.
- Children spoke with the inspector during the inspection.
- The inspector observed the quality of education being provided, and assessed the impact that this was having on children's learning.
- The inspector spoke with the manager about the leadership and management of the setting.
- Several parents spoke to the inspector during the inspection and shared their views of the setting.

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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