

Inspection of Early Birds, Night Owls & Appletree Pre-School

Windhill 21, Windhill Primary School, Windhill, Bishop's Stortford CM23 2NE

Inspection date:

15 May 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

Not applicable

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is outstanding

Children flourish at this unique and exquisite setting. As soon as they arrive, children become deeply engrossed in stimulating and fascinating activities. Leaders create a warm and welcoming environment, where children feel 'at home'. They carefully consider children's needs, abilities, interests and background when planning a wide array of inspirational activities. Staff and leaders offer children endless opportunities to make informed decisions about what they would like to explore next, guiding them and nurturing them every step of the way.

Staff and leaders are incredibly supportive and caring. They have very high expectations of children who follow the setting's routines with ease and confidence. For example, at mealtimes, older children dish out their own food and pour their own drinks to be better prepared for school. Younger children are supported to build the skills necessary to become positive and independent learners. Children behave exceptionally well and display high levels of respect and consideration towards peers and adults.

Children form very fond relationships with all staff who are readily available to support their emerging needs. Staff value children's achievements and efforts and continuously offer praise and affirmation. This helps children feel involved and appreciated during their time at this setting, which helps develop their emotional resilience.

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

- Leaders are very knowledgeable and creative. They implement distinctive teaching methods and strategies to provide children with mesmerising and fascinating learning experiences. Leaders have created a very ambitious curriculum that is well sequenced. They have a very clear vision of what they want children to learn. They place a great emphasis on consolidating children's previously acquired knowledge and build upon that for remarkable results.
- Leaders and staff have effective and robust strategies to get to know the children. They organise home visits and tailored settling-in sessions to capture more information about children's needs, abilities and family background. Staff consistently complete observations, progress assessments and next steps in children's learning that they share with the parents. Children who require additional support are aided through well-thought-out and carefully adapted activities. As a result, they settle remarkably well and make rapid progress in their learning.
- Staff and leaders are exemplary role models to all children. They are kind and attentive, always finding ingenious ways to stimulate children's thinking and problem-solving skills. For example, in the garden, staff 'challenge' children to

build their own structure. Children use large tyres, wooden logs and planks of wood to create their own balance beam. They work closely with their peers, sharing and testing their ideas. Staff encourage them to persevere when challenges occur while modelling positive interactions with their peers. Children then laugh and giggle with excitement as they skilfully walk on the beam to further develop their balance and coordination. In addition, staff prompt children to then engage in pretend play while balancing on the beam to also build on their imaginative and role-play skills.

- Staff provide children with language-abundant learning experiences. For example, as children explore a tray with playdough, real plants and crocodile toys, staff promote new and ambitious words, such as 'ginormous'. They explain that 'ginormous' means 'huge' or 'massive'. They clearly explain the meaning, offering children time to process, understand and securely embed the new vocabulary. This is extended to children who speak English as an additional language, who rapidly acquire the new skills needed to communicate effectively.
- Leadership is inspirational. They are reflective and ambitious and work relentlessly to ensure they provide children with the best start to their early education. Leaders install a positive and supporting culture across the setting, while valuing staff's well-being and their professional development. They ensure that all staff benefit from regular meetings and customised training programmes. Leaders' vision and aspirations are embraced by all staff with dedication and commitment.
- Partnerships with parents are excellent. They value the staff's warm and nurturing nature and report that their children thrive at this setting. Staff and leaders go above and beyond to support parents, guiding them through difficulties and involving them in their children's learning journey.

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	2710033
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10380780
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Day care type	Sessional day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	2 to 11
Total number of places	72
Number of children on roll	97
Name of registered person	Early Bird and Night Owl Childcare Ltd
Registered person unique reference number	2710029
Telephone number	01279 771367
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

Early Birds, Night Owls and Apple Tree Pre-School re-registered due to a change in legal ownership in 2022. It opens from 7.30am to 6.30pm, Monday to Friday, during term time only. The setting employs 12 members of childcare staff, of whom eight hold appropriate qualifications at level 3. The setting provides funded early education for all eligible children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Anca Sandu

Inspection activities

- The inspector discussed with the leaders how the curriculum is organised and what they want children to learn.
- The inspector observed the quality of teaching and education and assessed the impact this has on children's learning.
- The inspector spoke with the staff at appropriate times throughout the inspection.
- Children spoke with the inspector about the activities they were doing.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation with the manager.
- Parents spoke about the setting to the inspector, who took account of their views.
- The inspector held a meeting with the managers and nominated individual. She looked at relevant documentation and reviewed evidence of the suitability of the staff working at 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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