

Inspection of Little Ladybirds & Night Owls

Hillmead Primary School, Woburn Avenue, Bishop's Stortford CM23 4PW

Inspection date: 24 April 2025

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 enjoy their time in this nurturing pre-school and are happy and settled. Staff greet the children on arrival and help to settle new attendees. For example, staff share familiar family photos with the children. Staff know the children well and set up engaging activities based on their interests. For example, children enthusiastically cross raised planks, balancing with good control. Older children thoroughly enjoy supporting the younger children, and others pretend to be crocodiles. During this time, staff further support and build on children's learning, according to each child's individual needs. Children demonstrate independence and confidence and maintain focus in their chosen activities. They behave well and are caring to each other. Furthermore, during activities, children demonstrate persistence and resilience.

Staff successfully create a wide range of activities in the outdoor area. For example, during the water-play activity, staff encourage the children to remove the lids from bottles independently and to fill their jugs with water. They use this opportunity to introduce the concepts of empty and full and to predict how many scoops are needed to fill the jugs. Children are eager to take part in the painting activity. They jump excitedly to put their paint onto the card, which is hanging from the trees. Younger children are supported in applying sunscreen as staff mirror the actions needed to rub it in and talk about the 'forehead', 'cheeks', 'chin' and 'nose'.

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

- Leaders and staff have high expectations of the children, using their interests to develop an ambitious curriculum. All staff have shared values and follow the ethos of the pre-school. Most staff have worked there for several years. This contributes to smooth running of the early years provision, which helps children to feel safe and secure.
- Each key person knows their children well and what they need to do to help them make good progress. They work with parents to review children's next steps, which helps them to decide what to teach children.
- Staff's well-being is a high priority for managers and is a strength of the pre-school. Staff have access to confidential support. They work very well together and have a passion for working with children. Leaders monitor practice and support staff in their professional development well.
- Staff place high priority on supporting children's independence. During lunch, children confidently serve themselves, and younger children are supported to cut up their food. Children pour their own drinks and scrape excess food from their plates into the bin. Sometimes, daily routines are not organised effectively. Staff do not recognise when some children wander around and become disengaged from the activities provided.

- Staff provide a range of activities to support children to develop their hand-eye coordination and large-muscle skills. They encourage children to balance on beams, and they explain why they sometimes tip, showing how to secure them. Children are careful when using scoops and syringes to pour water into bottles.
- Overall teaching is good, and staff have a good understanding of how different children learn. Although children enjoy the learning activities on offer, at times staff do not always respond to teaching opportunities during children's play to extend their learning to the highest level.
- Managers and staff have developed strong links with parents. They carry out home visits before each child starts, which helps to develop the partnership with parents. Staff gather useful information about the children on these visits, which helps them to create activities based around their interests. Children settle quickly as a result. Parents have access to an app where daily information is shared. They enjoy the communication links, which help them to know their child is settled and making progress in their development. Staff encourage parents to take books to share at home from the 'lending library'. Additionally, staff liaise with the on-site nursery staff to ensure continuity of care.
- Children who need extra support are swiftly identified by their key person. Staff maintain ongoing discussions with parents and establish links with outside agencies. This supports children's ongoing learning and development effectively and helps to reduce any differences in their learning.

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

- support staff to strengthen their interactions with children during their play to extend their learning to the highest level
- review the organisation of routines and help staff to recognise when children become disengaged from the activities on offer.

Setting details

Unique reference number	2710034
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10380781
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	96
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

Little Ladybirds & Night Owls registered in 2022. It operates from a nursery classroom in Hillmead Primary School, Bishop's Stortford, Hertfordshire. The pre-school is open from 12.15pm to 3.15pm, and the after-school club opens from 3.15pm to 6.30pm, Monday to Friday, during school term times. The pre-school employs six members of staff, five of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 2 or above. It provides government funded early years education for all eligible children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector
Clare Eyre

Inspection activities

- The manager and the inspector discussed the early years curriculum during a learning walk.
- The inspector observed activities indoors and outside. She spoke to staff at appropriate times throughout the inspection and took account of their views.
- The inspector observed lunchtime.
- The inspector and the manager observed a planned activity together and discussed what they had seen.
- The inspector looked at relevant documentation, including the suitability of staff.
- The management and leadership team held a meeting with the inspector.
- The inspector spoke to three parents and took account of their views.

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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