

High Wych Pre-School Nursery

Unique reference number (URN): EY426856

Address: The Bullfields Centre, Cutforth Road, Sawbridgeworth, Hertfordshire, CM21 9EA

Type: Childcare on non-domestic premises

Registered with Ofsted: 21/04/2011

Registers: EYR

Registered person: High Wych Pre-School Nursery Committee

Inspection report: 14 May 2026

Exceptional	
Strong standard	
Expected standard	
Needs attention	
Urgent improvement	

Safeguarding standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, children are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect settings for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- **Met:** The setting has an open and positive culture of safeguarding.
- **Not met:** The setting has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard 

Children, including those who face barriers to their learning, typically make positive progress in all areas of their development. Children develop the skills they need for the next stage of their education. For example, younger children enjoy scooping and pouring water in the water tray, while older children use pipettes to strengthen the small muscles in their hands and fingers.

Children are well prepared for their move to school. They develop familiarity with their new environment before they start and the confidence to manage the changes that come with this transition. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive the additional support they need to help them feel secure and ready for the next stage in their learning. As a result, children approach their move to school with confidence and are equipped with the skills they need for a successful start.

Behaviour, attitudes and establishing routines

Expected standard 

Leaders and staff create warm and professional relationships with children and their families, helping to develop trust and feelings of safety and security. Leaders have successfully embedded the 'golden rules', through the curriculum and daily practice, across the setting. Staff regularly revisit these during circle times and throughout the day to help children develop a secure understanding of expectations and positive behaviour.

Leaders have carefully reviewed and adapted daily routines to support children's behaviour and engagement. They recognise that a previous lack of structure impacted children's ability to focus and feel secure. As a result, children now benefit from predictable routines that help them understand what will happen next and throughout the day. This promotes children's sense of security, emotional wellbeing and positive attitudes towards learning. Although routines are generally well established, some transitions are not organised as effectively as others. For example, when children prepare to go outside, the coat area can become overcrowded with multiple groups waiting at the same time. This results in some children waiting for extended periods before transitioning outdoors, and they sometimes become restless. Leaders promote the importance of regular attendance and monitor any concerns effectively.

Children's welfare and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Children's welfare and wellbeing are typically promoted effectively. Staff have an inclusive approach and supervise children, including those with complex health needs, carefully. They implement health and safety procedures well to support children's wellbeing. Clear systems are in place to support children's dietary, medical and allergy needs appropriately and safely. Leaders and staff build positive relationships with children and their families from the outset. New families benefit from settling-in sessions, home visits and welcome packs to help them adjust to the setting. Children are supported to form secure attachments with their key

person, with arrangements adapted where bonds develop with other staff. Staff gather key information from parents and carers to support children's welfare and wellbeing effectively.

Staff generally promote healthy lifestyles appropriately. Snack times are used well to encourage discussions about healthy eating and to help children develop positive attitudes towards trying new fruits and vegetables. Hygiene routines help children understand how to keep themselves healthy, and they benefit from regular opportunities to develop physical skills, including through visits to local parks. Indoor obstacle courses promote balance and coordination and support children's understanding of risk. Leaders support children to develop an awareness of oral health through a dedicated station with toothbrushes and toothpaste. However, teaching is not consistently focused in this area, which means children do not always develop a secure understanding of oral health practices.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have a clear understanding of what children need to learn and have designed a curriculum that supports this effectively, with a particular focus on listening and attention skills. Staff provide children with a range of opportunities to develop their concentration, communication and engagement through well-planned activities and interactions.

Leaders recognise the differing developmental needs of children within the nursery. While children benefit from opportunities to play and learn in mixed-age groups, they also take part in smaller-group activities, organised according to ages and abilities. For example, during circle time, younger children take part in turn-taking games, such as rolling a ball to one another, while older children engage in storytelling, supporting their language development. Children who face barriers to their learning are given time and space for them to engage in these groups in their own time. Staff generally adapt their teaching appropriately to support children's differing ages and stages of development. However, the most able children do not consistently receive enough challenge in their learning to help them make the best possible progress.

Leaders recognise that less-experienced staff are continuing to develop their skills. The more experienced staff mentor newer team members to help promote greater consistency in practice and support children's ongoing care and learning across the setting.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders work closely with a range of external professionals to provide children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) with targeted support. They collaborate effectively with inclusion development officers and specialist advisory teachers, for instance, to identify and assess children's needs and implement appropriate strategies to support their learning and development. Children who face barriers to learning have clear individual education plans in place, and staff are deployed effectively to provide targeted support and to implement next steps. A dedicated sensory room is used well to deliver focused one-to-one support, helping children with SEND to make positive progress from their starting points.

Leaders typically promote an inclusive environment where children and families feel valued. Diversity is celebrated well through activities, such as celebration days and food festivals,

helping children learn about different cultures and communities and to see themselves positively reflected within the environment and resources. For example, to support children wearing hearing aids, staff purchased a doll with hearing aids to help promote familiarity and inclusion. Visual aids are used effectively to support children who speak English as an additional language, helping them to communicate successfully and understand routines. Important messages, such as the 'golden rules', are displayed in multiple languages, helping all children and families feel welcomed and included within the setting.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders work as a team and have high expectations for all children. They are committed to continuously evaluating the provision and have implemented clear action plans since their last inspection to raise standards. Leaders work closely with the committee, although some new committee members have not yet completed suitability checks. Leaders are addressing this and have put measures in place to ensure this does not impact on children.

Staff are generally well supported through regular supervision meetings, where practice is discussed and feedback is provided. Measurable targets support ongoing development, alongside coaching and modelling from leaders, who maintain a presence throughout the setting. Staff benefit from regular professional development opportunities and describe leaders as approachable and supportive. Although professional development is generally well targeted, there are occasional inconsistencies in teaching for certain groups of children. Team meetings provide opportunities for staff to share concerns, reflect on practice and celebrate success. Staff wellbeing is promoted through these systems, alongside social events and recognition awards.

Leaders develop positive links with the local community, including visits from community professionals and trips to local shops and libraries. Partnerships with parents and carers are established and contribute positively to children's learning. Leaders use an online system to share information, next steps and home-learning ideas. Families are supported through 'meet-and-greet' and 'play-and-stay' sessions, helping children settle quickly. Parents speak highly of the setting.

What it's like to be a child at this setting

Children thoroughly enjoy their time at this warm and inviting setting. Leaders and staff welcome all families. They promote regular attendance and value their contributions, helping them to feel fully included in the setting community. Children are warmly welcomed as they

arrive, with extra support given to those who face barriers to their learning, to support a smooth transition into the day. They quickly settle and develop positive relationships with staff, which helps them to feel safe, secure and ready to learn.

Children typically demonstrate high levels of engagement in their learning. Staff provide a range of carefully planned activities that capture children's interest and build on what they already know and can do. For example, children enjoy mark making with paints and use their imagination as they mix colours to create pictures. They proudly share their work with staff and express a desire to take it home to show to parents and carers. Children develop their understanding of life cycles through meaningful, hands-on experiences that promote curiosity and early scientific understanding. For example, during a recent project, children cared for caterpillar eggs as they hatched and developed into caterpillars and butterflies. Children eagerly observe butterflies during their day, reinforcing their learning and sense of wonder.

Staff interact effectively alongside children, extending their learning through purposeful interactions. Children enjoy the role-play area, where they play cooperatively with their peers and staff, pretending to cook and prepare meals. This helps children to build on their communication and social skills well. Leaders and staff promote an inclusive environment where all children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who face other barriers to learning, are supported effectively. As a result, children generally make positive progress in their learning and development and acquire the skills they need for the next stage in their education.

Next steps

- Leaders should support staff to communicate effectively to enhance transitions for children, such as when they move to the outside area.
- Leaders should focus teaching for the most able children to help advance their progress in learning even further.
- Leaders should support staff to focus teaching about oral health to help children develop a secure understanding of dental-hygiene practices.

About this inspection

The inspector spoke with leaders, staff, special educational needs coordinators, parents, carers and children during the inspection.

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.

Inspector:

Emily Woodhead

About this setting

Unique reference number (URN): EY426856

Address:

The Bullfields Centre
Cutforth Road
Sawbridgeworth
Hertfordshire
CM21 9EA

Type: Childcare on non-domestic premises

Registration date: 21/04/2011

Registered person: High Wych Pre-School Nursery Committee

Register(s): EYR

Operating hours: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday : 08:50 - 15:00

Local authority: Hertfordshire

Facts and figures used on inspection

This data was available to the inspector at the time of the inspection.

 This data is from 14 May 2026

Children numbers

Age range of children at the time of inspection

2 to 4

Total number of places

30

Our grades explained

Exceptional

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other settings can learn from it.

Strong standard

The setting reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard

The setting is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement

The setting needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

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