

Little Elmhurst Nursery

Unique reference number (URN): 2833826

Address: Elmhurst School, 44-48 S Park Hill Rd, South Croydon, CR2 7DW

Type: Childcare on non-domestic premises

Registered with Ofsted: 30/04/2025

Registers: EYR

Registered person: Elmhurst School Ltd

Inspection report: 27 August 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 make adequate progress from their starting points and develop key skills across all areas of learning. Those children that move on to the pre-school are suitably prepared. They show confidence in self-care tasks and are enthusiastic about their independence. Children show pride in helping with routine tasks, such as setting up tables for lunch and helping prepare beds for sleep. Younger children feed themselves well and typically follow simple instructions. However, children do not always understand expectations as staff are not consistent with their teaching of this.

Children communicate their needs well. They are able to articulate to staff if they need support and are positive during cooperative play with friends. Children confidently make choices about their play. They choose activities that interest them and typically stay engaged in their learning.

Behaviour, attitudes and establishing routines

Expected standard 

Leaders have created a warm, welcoming environment that supports children to settle quickly. Children show positive attitudes to learning and are eager to join in group activities. Staff have established warm bonds with children and know them well. They understand their individual needs and which children may require support with their regulation. Staff typically implement strategies, such as a timer, and support children with turn-taking. They utilise calming spaces so that children can manage their emotions, and they consistently offer them praise and encouragement.

Children typically follow routines such as tidying up and preparing to go outside. However, approaches to support children with routine changes and transitions are newly embedded and not implemented consistently. As a result, there are times where children are wandering for brief periods until an adult intervenes. Overall, leaders and staff have high expectations for children's behaviour. Staff use golden rules and gentle reminders to support children's good behaviour. However, this approach is not consistent for all children, and staff do not always remind children of expectations or explain why rules are in place. This means that some children are not developing a deeper understanding of what is expected of them.

Leaders promote attendance and punctuality well. They have robust systems to track and monitor children's attendance percentages and work in partnership with parents over any concerns. Leaders share their expectations with parents to report any absences. This further supports readiness for starting school.

Children's welfare and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Leaders and staff prioritise children's emotional wellbeing. They create an inclusive, nurturing environment that helps children, including those with any emerging needs, settle quickly. Staff have built secure attachments with children and acknowledge their efforts. This further supports their self-esteem and confidence. Hygiene and care routines are generally

implemented well. Children confidently wash their hands at appropriate times, and staff ensure children's privacy and dignity during nappy changes. Children benefit from fresh air each day and active learning in the outdoor environment. This helps them develop their larger muscles and supports their overall wellbeing.

Leaders and staff provide healthy, nutritious meals for children. Older children develop their independence as they self-serve and use utensils appropriately to eat. Staff typically discuss with children the benefits of the food they eat and why being healthy is important. Children make independent choices. A newly introduced rolling lunch lets them decide to eat when they are hungry. Leaders have introduced this recently to support children's autonomy and utilise lunchtime as an impactful learning experience. However, this approach is not yet consistently implemented. For example, staff do not always explain reasoning to children of why they should sit to eat or let their food settle before running. As a result, children are not consistently developing a deeper understanding of healthy habits for the future.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have accurate oversight of the overall ambitious curriculum. They have effective plans in place to support the delivery of consistent high-quality teaching. However, leaders also recognise that training is yet to be fully embedded so staff identify when to extend learning. At times, younger children do not fully engage in activities as staff do not consistently challenge their thinking effectively. Staff build their curriculum around children's interests. Parents provide photos of children's learning during the weekend so staff can extend this into weekly activities. This supports children to progress well across the early years foundation stage.

The curriculum prioritises children's communication and language. Staff typically repeat and introduce new words to further enhance children's vocabulary. Children enjoy listening to familiar stories and use props linked to the book to help tell the story. This supports staff to test children's knowledge and understanding. Children experiment and compare colours, younger children add colours to play dough they make and older children explore colours they see in the environment. Children use their knowledge of shapes and numbers to support them as they search for butterflies. In the sand, they fill containers and name shapes using moulds.

Staff who work with babies help them to feel secure in their personal, social and emotional development. They are close by and offer reassurance and comfort, supporting children to feel safe to explore the environment.

Children with any emerging needs and those who speak English as an additional language benefit from teaching bespoke to them. Staff understand their starting points and implement strategies such as visual timetables and a now and next board to process learning in simple ways.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders identify children with emerging needs or areas of potential delay early on. Leaders and staff know their children well and get to know families from the outset. They build excellent relationships with them so that sensitive conversations happen early and

immediate support can be put in place. Leaders ensure staff use assessment and monitoring strategies to review children's progress. This means that support for children is adaptive to their developing needs.

Leaders have created spaces for children, such as a calm sensory room, alongside quiet areas within the environment. Staff typically use these spaces well to support children who may require help with their emotional needs. Staff work with parents to learn phrases and key words in children's home languages. This supports children who speak English as an additional language to feel understood and welcome in the environment.

Leaders plan professional development for inclusion well. This ensures staff are equipped with the knowledge to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Leaders work closely with professionals and utilise their advice and strategies. Close partnerships with the school further support smooth transitions and help create an overall inclusive environment.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard

Leaders demonstrate a clear understanding of the setting's strengths and areas of development. They have already made impactful changes in a short period and acted quickly to address weaknesses. Leaders are present and role model high-quality teaching with staff. They utilise peer observations and regular staff meetings to help them reflect on their practice. Leaders ensure staff access a range of specialist training, including age-specific training. However, this is not fully implemented and staff are unclear about the impact of training on children's learning.

Leaders are passionate, proactive and dedicated to improving the outcomes of all children. They ensure children with any emerging needs are identified early, and swift support is put in place. Leaders have established good links with local schools and other professionals. This supports staff to provide high-quality care and strengthen transitions for when children move on.

Staff report that their wellbeing is well supported. They benefit from working with leaders who are professional and experienced and show genuine care for their wellbeing. Leaders have created 'zen' spaces, which are calm and relaxing environments for staff to recharge. Parents speak highly of leaders and the nursery. They say they are kept well informed about their children's progress and feel included in their development. Parents share their talents and skills during planned sessions. This further supports children to develop new skills and an understanding of the world around them.

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

Children and their families are warmly welcomed by staff. Children settle quickly and are eager to explore activities and play alongside friends. They demonstrate the close, trusting bonds they have formed with staff as they seek them out for comfort and initiate discussions with them. Staff model listening skills to children. They wait patiently for them to finish speaking, and this supports children to feel valued. Staff provide inviting activities that support children's interests and help them develop the necessary skills for the next stage in their learning. Younger children spend time exploring their senses creating play dough, and older children use rolling tools and investigate texture with cornflour.

During play, children typically benefit from staff who closely track their development and support their growing communication. Children sing familiar songs and show an understanding of early mathematics concepts such as big and small. Children who speak English as an additional language are equally supported well, with staff building on their home languages during interactions. Children listen and behave well. They show kindness and care towards others and are developing their social skills. Staff encourage children's independence. Younger children safely use stairs with confidence, and older children show pride getting dressed to visit the garden.

Children are active and benefit from the outdoor environment each day. They climb and use a range of equipment to develop their spatial awareness and physical skills. Children engage in imaginative play. Older children run in the garden as they pretend they are superheroes, and younger children show an interest in small-world play. Inclusion is well considered, and children with any emerging needs are identified early. Staff know children extremely well and build on their fantastic parent partnerships to ensure early support is put in place.

Next steps

- Leaders should support staff to implement a consistent approach to explaining rules and expectations to children, so that they understand what is expected of them and why.
 - Leaders should strengthen staff professional development so that children receive high-quality interactions that support and extend their learning.
 - Leaders should support staff to embed consistent transitions and routines so children remain engaged.
 - Leaders should help staff to refine their teaching and interactions, particularly to offer children a more consistent understanding of healthy habits.
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About this inspection

The inspector spoke with leaders and staff 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:

Tania King

About this setting

Unique reference number (URN): 2833826

Address:

Elmhurst School
44-48 S Park Hill Rd
South Croydon
CR2 7DW

Type: Childcare on non-domestic premises

Registration date: 30/04/2025

Registered person: Elmhurst School Ltd

Register(s): EYR

Operating hours: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday : 07:30 - 18:00

Local authority: Croydon

Facts and figures used on inspection

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

 This data is from 27 August 2026

Children numbers

Age range of children at the time of inspection

0 to 2

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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