

Inspection of Monkey Puzzle Day Nursery St Albans

The Old Station, Orient Close, St Albans, Hertfordshire AL1 1JD

Inspection date: 5 January 2023

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
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The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Overall effectiveness at previous
inspection

Outstanding

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is outstanding

Children come into the nursery setting excited and eager to learn. As children arrive, they are warmly welcomed by staff with huge smiles and an abundance of enthusiasm. A highly effective key-person system ensures that children and families form exceptionally strong bonds with staff.

Children are extremely independent, and this is seamlessly threaded throughout the nursery. As a result, all children become highly self-reliant and learn the skills required for their next stage of learning. For example, younger children go and access a mirror to look at their faces without prompt and then begin to clean their own face independently.

Children are eager to recite stories and do so with intonation and animation. From babies through to pre-school, all children show a deep love of stories, songs, and rhymes. Staff support early language development with the use of Makaton. For example, babies copy signs to 'Old MacDonald' as adults sing. Staff encourage children to develop their interest in stories. The staff skilfully plan activities to support children as they learn about the characters. For example, pre-school children are learning about 'The Wizard of Oz.' They go on a walk to collect materials that they think could build a scarecrow. Children delight as they discuss what they have collected and suggest ways in which they can construct their scarecrow.

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

- The nursery is highly inclusive, and children eagerly talk about their culture. Older children show off their 'culture book'. They discuss their likes, their interests and talk about members of their family. Their peers are excited to ask questions. Staff in all rooms ensure that they know their children exceptionally well and support those children who speak English as an additional language. Staff use enthusiastic and animated voices when they speak, use signing, gestures, pictorial aids and keywords to support children. As a result, children make exceptional progress and are very confident to communicate with their peers and adults.
- Opportunities for children to acquire new language are plentiful. Pre-school children go on a bear hunt in the garden. Staff ask the children which way they should go next. They model words, such as north, east, south and west, while pointing at the directions. Children respond positively to this and use this new language spontaneously in their play. Younger children are encouraged to guess the names of animals as they enjoy a group time. Staff give time for children to respond to questions asked of them. As a result, children are confident to think for themselves and express their own ideas.

- The management team have appointed a coordinator to support the mental well-being of children, families and staff. A programme has been designed to ensure that children are able to regulate their emotions, and this is adapted to the relevant stages of development. For example, babies touch hands with an adult, singing about gentle hands. Well-being packs are created for families when they need extra support and are signposted to any additional services that may be of benefit to them. Staff talk about how happy they are in their work and that they 'are a family'.
- Children develop an exceptional understanding of the world around them. Regular visits to natural play spaces in the local area and links with the local cathedral give children a strong sense of community. Staff are passionate about creating awe and wonder for children. They create new experiences for children to consolidate their learning. For example, older children learn to change their clothes before outdoor activities, which supports them with the transition to school. Additionally, they take part in yoga, football and gymnastics classes. As a result, children are gaining a wealth of knowledge and skills to prepare them for their future success.
- Parents are truly valued as partners in their child's education. Feedback from parents is excellent. They comment that all staff know their children incredibly well, no matter which room their child attends. Parents state that their children 'make exceptionally good progress', and that they 'trust each member of staff as they are transparent and open with communication.'

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

All staff have a thorough understanding of their roles and responsibilities. This helps them to keep children safe from the risk of potential harm. They demonstrate a secure knowledge of what actions to take if they had concerns about a child's welfare, or if an allegation was made against a fellow staff member. Leaders and managers ensure that staff are aware of potential safeguarding risks in the local area, and their knowledge is continuously updated. Effective risk assessments ensure a safe environment for children within the nursery and while on outings. Leaders and managers follow robust recruitment processes. They are committed to checking the ongoing suitability of staff working with children. This helps to promote children's safety to the highest level.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY412270
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10265326
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	1 to 4
Total number of places	48
Number of children on roll	53
Name of registered person	Amanda Griffiths Limited
Registered person unique reference number	RP906686
Telephone number	01727 568 366
Date of previous inspection	2 June 2017

Information about this early years setting

Monkey Puzzle Day Nursery St Albans registered in 2010. The nursery employs 20 members of childcare staff. Of these, 16 hold appropriate early years qualifications at levels 2, 3, or 4; four at level 6 and two hold qualified teacher status. The nursery opens from Monday to Friday, all year round. Sessions are from 7.30am until 6.30pm. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Amy Clarkson

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the nursery 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 setting.
- The manager and inspector completed a learning walk together of all areas of the nursery and discussed the early years curriculum.
- Children communicated with the inspector during the inspection.
- Staff spoke to the inspector during the inspection.
- The mental well-being coordinator spoke to the inspector about how they support children, families and staff.
- The inspector observed the quality of education being provided, both indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact that this was having on children's learning.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation of a group activity with the manager.
- Parents shared their views of the nursery with the inspector.

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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