

Inspection of Little Stars Pre-School & Nursery

St Luke's Church, St. Albans AL1 5QJ

Inspection date: 29 June 2021

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

Not applicable

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is outstanding

Children are happy, secure and confident and thrive in this nurturing setting. They show a mature understanding of their own learning and take an active role in this. Children help themselves to toy animals that relate to the qualities needed for effective learning, for example stating 'I'm exploring like the elephant'. Children's behaviour is exemplary. They build excellent relationships with adults and with their peers. They show delight in experimenting and using their creativity. Children work harmoniously together and confidently share their thoughts and ideas, secure in the knowledge that these will be valued. For example, children use large wooden blocks to make an 'instrument cake', adding tambourines as decorations. A staff member offers lots of praise as children describe the red bolt being a cherry and a truck being candles.

Staff are highly sensitive to the potential effects of the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic on children and families. During each national lockdown they worked tirelessly to promote their well-being and help children continue their learning. For example, families could join a daily online story or use the individualised activity packs delivered to their doors. Children continue to participate in group activities that promote their social skills and help them to understand the pandemic without being scared.

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

- Leaders are devoted to making the setting the best it can be. They inspire staff and continuously make improvements so that they can support children to make the very best possible progress. Meticulous monitoring of children's progress means that staff are alert to any potential gaps in learning. They take immediate action to address these, ensuring that all children are very well prepared for school.
- All staff demonstrate a steadfast commitment to fully understanding the uniqueness of every child. This enables them to offer children individual support and rich play experiences that aid them in developing the skills and knowledge that reinforce their ability to learn and to succeed in life.
- Children are engrossed in their play, eagerly exploring and competently explaining their ideas. For example, children make holes in dough. They compare the number of holes and work out that they can add others in multiples of four. These opportunities help develop a secure understanding of mathematics.
- Parents have a very high opinion of the setting. They feel that communication is excellent and they fully understand their child's next steps. Staff offer personalised, practical guidance to help parents extend their child's learning.
- Staff make the best of every opportunity to extend children's communication

skills. For instance, children use crates and chairs to make a bus. A staff member sings with them about 'Going to St Albans town'. Children laugh as they join in and think of items, such as 'curly cress', that they can buy at the shops.

- All staff are clear about the purpose of activities. They skilfully adapt these so that every child is challenged. For example, children are fully engaged and follow instructions as they roll, twist and pinch dough in time to music, supporting the development of their physical skills and extending their vocabulary.
- An excellent knowledge of every child means that leaders make well-informed decisions about the use of additional funding. This has been used, for example, to enable staff to offer children music therapy sessions that allow children to express themselves.
- Staff pay close attention to children's interests, expertly using these to extend children's learning. For example, children interested in snails learn to handle these carefully and understand what they need to survive. This interest is extended through the growing of pumpkins and a 'grass meadow' in a tray. Children refer to fictional and reference books to support their knowledge.
- Leaders have a deep understanding of the needs of children and staff. They organise pertinent training and support staff to put new learning into practice. An example of this is speech and language training, where staff now support children with innovative, practical methods. This particularly benefits children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language, and they make excellent progress.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and staff have an excellent knowledge of safeguarding. They complete frequent training and review safeguarding at all staff meetings and supervision sessions. Staff are exceptionally confident in identifying and reporting any concerns about children's welfare. Comprehensive procedures ensure that leaders frequently review any concerns in order to take action at the earliest opportunity. Staff demonstrate an extremely secure understanding of the risks posed to children by exposure to extreme views or practices. They appreciate the possible dangers related to the use of the internet and take very effective action to protect children.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY551302
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10174039
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register
Day care type	Sessional day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	2 to 5
Total number of places	40
Number of children on roll	58
Name of registered person	D&M Young Solutions Limited
Registered person unique reference number	RP551301
Telephone number	07824774102
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

Little Stars Pre-School & Nursery registered in 2017. The setting employs eight members of childcare staff. Of these, six hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 or above. The setting opens from Monday to Friday during term time. Sessions are from 9am until 3pm. The setting provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector
Kelly Eyre

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the setting received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the setting and has taken this into account in their evaluation of the setting.
- The inspector and the setting manager carried out a learning walk across all areas of the setting to discuss and understand how the early years provision and the curriculum are organised.
- The inspector observed staff interaction with children during activities indoors and outdoors and assessed the impact this has on children's learning.
- The inspector completed a joint observation with the setting manager.
- A meeting was held between the inspector, the setting manager and the owner. The inspector looked at relevant documentation and saw evidence of the suitability of staff.
- The inspector held discussions with staff, children and parents at appropriate times during the inspection 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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