

Inspection of The Unicorn Nursery

The Unicorn Nursery, 11 Lower Broughton Road, SALFORD M7 1WE

Inspection date: 20 August 2021

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good
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What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children are well settled and happy at this good nursery. They develop positive relationships with staff and other children. Staff have high expectations for children's learning and behaviour, and children follow these well. Children learn to take turns during their play and are given extra help from staff, if needed.

Due to the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic, children's experiences are a little different to usual. For example, children use hand sanitiser and have their temperature checked when they arrive each day. They adapt very well to changes and happily wave goodbye to their parents at the entrance. Children show positive attitudes towards their play. They access a good range of age-appropriate toys, which support their learning and exploration. Children skilfully name small models of dinosaurs and act out stories. They develop small-muscle skills by building towers with construction blocks and making marks on paper using crayons. Outdoors, children show good physical skills as they confidently run and use tricycles. Babies show delight while they make handprints and marks in flour with their fingers, and as they look at their reflections. They climb up to use low-level apparatus and develop their balance and coordination.

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

- Leaders explain that the well-being of children, families and staff are of utmost importance in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. During nursery closures, leaders check that children and staff are safe and well. Staff comment that leaders support them well. They attend meetings, supervision and training sessions to help to improve their practice.
- Children make good progress. Gaps in their learning are identified and closed by effective assessment and planning. Parents and external professionals are included in the reviews and interventions for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. This means that barriers to learning are reduced, and the curriculum is tailored to their needs.
- Children are provided with a broad and balanced curriculum, which builds on their interests and what they already know and can do. For example, children show an interest in hairdressing. Staff follow this interest and extend children's imaginative play by providing them with brushes and bobbles. Outdoors, children look for twigs and leaves, and sort them into boxes. They notice a worm in the sand and a snail near the soil. Staff foster these exciting discoveries so that children can learn more about wildlife and the natural world around them.
- Overall, staff promote children's communication and language skills well. Children listen to stories with interest and sing along to songs, using their own ideas to suggest the actions to perform next. During their play, children are prompted to talk and are introduced to new words, such as 'slanted' and

'wobbly'. However, staff do not always engage children in thoughtful conversations throughout the day, and some questions asked to children are too narrow. As a result, some interactions between staff and children do not fully promote children's communication, language and thinking skills.

- Leaders identify that the curriculum for mathematics needs further enhancement. In the main, staff encourage children to develop their mathematical knowledge and skills. For example, during group activities, staff show children numbers to help them to develop number recognition. However, staff, sometimes, tell children answers without giving children time to solve problems for themselves. They do not consistently enable children to consolidate and extend their mathematical knowledge and skills.
- Care practices are good. Children's growing independence is given priority. Children learn to put on their own coats and wellington boots. They wash their hands before eating a variety of healthy foods. Children, including babies, learn to eat using cutlery. They are confident and demonstrate good behaviour.
- Overall, partnership working is good. Links with other settings enable children to be supported in their eventual move to school. Parents comment that staff are 'really positive' and that their children make good progress. Parents value the pictures and care updates provided electronically, as they cannot enter the nursery due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, this frequent sharing of information does not routinely focus on helping parents to support and extend their children's learning at home.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Detailed risk assessments help to ensure that the premises are safe and secure. Staff are well deployed. Robust recruitment arrangements make certain that all staff are suitable to work with children. Staff attend safeguarding training and keep this knowledge up to date. Staff understand how to identify children who may be at risk of harm. They know the actions to take if they have concerns about children's welfare or the conduct of a colleague. Staff understand safeguarding issues, such as peer-on-peer abuse and the 'Prevent' duty.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- give incisive feedback to staff around their interactions with children, to promote children's communication, language and thinking skills to the highest level
- enhance the curriculum for mathematics and support staff to implement this effectively, to better support children's mathematical knowledge and skills
- refine the information shared with parents, to routinely focus on helping to support and extend children's learning at home.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY539782
Local authority	Salford
Inspection number	10202557
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	0 to 4
Total number of places	96
Number of children on roll	85
Name of registered person	The Unicorn Nursery SA Limited
Registered person unique reference number	RP539781
Telephone number	07703741750
Date of previous inspection	8 January 2019

Information about this early years setting

The Unicorn Nursery registered in 2016. The nursery employs 15 members of staff. Of these, 12 hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 and above. Sessions are from 7.30am to 6pm, Monday to Friday, all year round. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

David Lobodzinski

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the setting received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the setting, and has taken that into account in his evaluation of the setting.
- The manager and the inspector completed a learning walk.
- A joint observation was carried out by the inspector and the manager.
- The inspector observed the interactions between staff and children throughout the day and evaluated the impact this has on children's learning.
- The inspector held discussions with the manager, staff, parents and children at appropriate times during the inspection.
- Relevant documentation was reviewed by the inspector, including evidence of the suitability and training of staff.

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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