

Inspection of Appletrees Child Care Ltd

21 Church Road, Flamstead, ST. ALBANS, Hertfordshire AL3 8BN

Inspection date: 29 October 2021

| | |
|------------------------------|-------------|
| Overall effectiveness | Good |
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The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Not applicable

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children feel safe and secure at the setting. Babies turn to staff for cuddles and reassurance. Older children wait patiently and take turns when talking to visitors. They talk politely about the costumes they wear for Halloween. Children learn about similarities and differences. For instance, staff share a book with children about what makes people different and talk about the different buildings the children live in. Children enjoy looking at the book independently later on. They repeat familiar phrases and say 'we are all different' as they turn the pages of the book carefully. Older children learn about the importance of dental hygiene. For example, they hold thoughtful discussions with staff about healthy eating.

Children understand about numbers and shapes. Younger children use number names in order. For example, staff say 'one, two' and children respond by saying 'three'. Older children recognise rectangular baking trays as they bake. They confidently count the number of sides on the tray. Children enjoy a wide range of new experiences at the setting. They learn about other cultures that are important to their friends. For instance, they create diva lamps out of clay and try special food to celebrate Diwali. This helps them to learn about the wider community.

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

- All children make good progress. Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive appropriate support. Staff interact positively with children and adapt their teaching to meet their needs. For example, they use simple language so that children can make choices independently. Staff meet with parents to discuss children's needs. They set appropriate learning targets, which they review regularly. Managers attend meetings with professionals. They share relevant information with school staff to help children transition smoothly to their new school.
- The management team has a strong vision for the setting. They continually evaluate the provision. Staff well-being is a priority. Managers adapt the planning and assessment system to help ease workloads. Staff work well together and support one another. For example, more-experienced staff members support those who are training for qualifications. This helps them to improve their teaching and strengthen their interactions with children.
- Families received strong support when the setting had to close temporarily as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Staff and managers worked hard to minimise gaps in children's learning. They provided activities to parents so that they could support individual children's targets. Parents shared children's home learning with staff. This helped staff to provide more challenging activities. Children who were new to the setting received videos of their new surroundings and staff. This supported them to settle in quickly when the setting reopened.

- The setting is an integral part of the local community. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, managers adapted community events. For instance, children wrote Christmas cards to elderly members of the community, instead of delivering food hampers. Children and parents are actively involved in making decisions about the setting. Children enjoy choosing resources from catalogues for the new allotment patch. Managers create an online poll for parents to choose activities, such as a farm visiting the setting.
- Staff know the children well and use their interests to motivate them. For example, staff know that children enjoy a story about a stick man. Children choose to create pictures using small sticks and glue. Staff provide music players so that children can listen to the story. Staff talk to children about the story and the sticks they use to create their pictures. This helps children to make connections between different areas of their learning.
- Staff plan engaging activities for children. Older children remain focused for long periods of time during adult-led activities. However, staff do not always arrange group activities appropriately. For instance, too many children participate in a cooking activity at once. Therefore, less-confident children do not always feel comfortable sharing their knowledge and understanding with others.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The staff team is aware of how to raise any concerns they may have in relation to children's welfare. Staff can confidently identify the possible signs that a child may be at risk of abuse. They have a strong awareness of wider safeguarding issues, such as female genital mutilation. Managers ensure that staff keep their safeguarding knowledge up to date. They provide them with regular training opportunities. Managers ensure that they follow their robust recruitment process to check that staff are suitable for their roles.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- enhance the planning of group activities so that all children have opportunities to consistently share their knowledge and understanding with others.

Setting details

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| Unique reference number | EY558924 |
| Local authority | Hertfordshire |
| Inspection number | 10190094 |
| 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 10 |
| Total number of places | 45 |
| Number of children on roll | 77 |
| Name of registered person | Appletrees Child Care Ltd |
| Registered person unique reference number | RP558923 |
| Telephone number | 01582 840586 |
| Date of previous inspection | Not applicable |

Information about this early years setting

Appletrees Child Care Ltd registered in 2018. The nursery employs 15 members of childcare staff. Of these, 12 staff hold appropriate early years qualifications. The nursery opens from Monday to Friday all year round, except for two weeks at Christmas when they close. Sessions are from 7.30am until 6pm. The nursery also provides an after-school club for children at the local primary school. This operates from 3.15pm until 6pm during term time only. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Jennifer Hardy

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 managers and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the setting.
- The inspector participated in a learning walk with the owner and manager. They discussed the way that the curriculum is arranged and the impact that this has on children's learning.
- The inspector held discussions with parents and read written feedback. She took their views of the setting into consideration.
- The inspector interacted with children at appropriate times throughout the inspection.
- Staff spoke to the inspector at appropriate times during the inspection. The inspector discussed safeguarding and children's development with them.

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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