

Inspection of Harpenden Day Nursery

34 Sun Lane, Harpenden, Hertfordshire AL5 4HA

Inspection date: 5 January 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
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 enjoy being at the nursery. They settle well in the morning to begin their day. The key-person system is effective, which ensures that children and staff have good, close relationships. Children know who to go to if they are feeling sad or need support. Staff have good knowledge of the children's needs and praise them throughout the day. This supports children's confidence and self-esteem. Children demonstrate good behaviour and take turns in their play. For example, children use a tape measure to work out how tall they are. They take turns to measure each other and investigate whether other things in the room are longer or shorter. Children practise good hygiene routines, such as washing their hands before eating their snack and lunch. They also know to put their tissues into the 'snuffle station' bin. There are lots of opportunities for children to develop their independence skills. In the baby room, children use forks and spoons to eat their main meals and drink from cups. Older children put their own coats and shoes on to go into the garden. These opportunities help children's development, for example in readiness for school.

All children enjoy playing in the garden. The babies explore the soil in the digging area, looking for worms and mixing water. Staff assist those who are learning to walk by holding their hands as they explore the garden. The older children ride around on bikes and scooters. They delight in racing each other up and down the garden. Children are encouraged to develop their physical skills, using the climbing frame. They also practise their scissor skills. They cut leaves off a mint plant to add to their play dough, while others cut Christmas cards to make pictures. This helps to develop their small-muscle strength.

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

- Staff prepare the rooms and activities to suit the individual needs of the children. For example, the baby room activities are at different heights to interest those children who are crawling as well as walkers. Staff understand children's next steps in learning and support these well throughout the day.
- Babies concentrate intently on their play. They spend time trying to fit balls through different-sized tubes until they successfully match the right items. This also helps them to develop early thinking skills to solve problems.
- Parents are extremely complimentary about the nursery. Staff involve parents in their children's learning. For example, parents joined in activities during 'Road Safety Week', to help children learn about keeping themselves safe. Children wore helmets while riding their scooters to nursery and talked about why they did this. Parents comment on how well staff have maintained key relationships, particularly throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The nursery provides lots of opportunities for children to develop their

mathematical skills. Children line up and count toy cars on a number line. They make pictures with magnetic shapes on a radiator. This helps children to develop an understanding of pattern.

- The manager has high expectations for the setting. She has a clear plan for continuous improvement and works with staff to include their views. Leaders demonstrate good practice on a daily basis. Staff have opportunities to watch each other working, to reflect and learn from each other. Throughout the day, the staff work well together as a team.
- Staff provide opportunities for children to develop their speech and language. They sing songs to babies and use props to offer visual cues. Pre-school children talk about their meals at lunchtime and discuss who cooks at home. However, staff do not always ensure that quieter or less-confident children are equally included in opportunities to develop their speech and language.
- The staff support transitions to school well. For example, school uniforms are available for children to use in the role-play area. Staff hold regular discussions with teachers to inform them about each child's needs. Parents receive information about their child's next steps for school so that they can provide continuity in their learning at home.
- Staff have high expectations for all children. They set out a range of activities to suit children and provide a balanced curriculum. However, they do not always provide opportunities to fully challenge the development of the most able children in the nursery.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff have good knowledge of safeguarding. They know the procedures to follow when there are concerns about a child. Designated leaders understand the relevant agencies to report to and are confident should they need to do so. All staff have completed relevant and up-to-date training. In addition, staff have sound knowledge of wider safeguarding issues, such as the 'Prevent' duty and radicalisation. The nursery environment is clean, safe and checked as part of regular risk assessments.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- enhance staff's ability to support children who are less confident to develop their language skills further
- help staff to support older and most-able children more successfully with more opportunities to extend their learning even further.

Setting details

Unique reference number	2546101
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10215561
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	1 to 3
Total number of places	38
Number of children on roll	51
Name of registered person	Three Little Birds Nurseries Limited
Registered person unique reference number	2546098
Telephone number	01582764172
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

Harpenden Day Nursery re-registered in 2019. The nursery employs 17 members of childcare staff. Of these, 10 hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 or above. The nursery opens from Monday to Friday all year round. Sessions are from 7.30am until 6pm. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector
Lisa Smith

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 nursery.
- The manager and the inspector had a learning walk of all areas of the nursery. The manager discussed the curriculum and what they want children to learn.
- The inspector talked to staff at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The inspector observed the quality of education provided, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact on children's learning.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation of a group activity with the manager.
- The inspector spoke to parents during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The inspector looked at relevant documentation and reviewed evidence of the suitability of staff working in the nursery.

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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