

Inspection of The Athelstan Nursery

Parish Rooms, Athelstan Road, Hastings, East Sussex TN35 5JE

Inspection date: 18 January 2022

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	Not applicable
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What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children come into the nursery happily and confidently. They are safe and secure in this warm and welcoming setting. There are trusting relationships between the adults and the children. They enjoy each other's company. For example, they laugh together as the children splash in the water tray and watch with delight as the water pours through the holes in the colander. Outside, a member of staff shows the children a spider's web, which fascinates the children. They rush off to find the toy spiders and other minibeasts. Children independently choose activities which motivate and challenge them. They demonstrate good concentration skills. They learn to play cooperatively, share and take turns. For example, children wait for their friends to finish on the balance bars before they begin their turn. Children behave well and staff resolve disputes quietly and effectively. For instance, when two children want the same roller, the staff member encourages them to find a second roller. The children then work happily together to paint the outside wall with water. Children respect the staff in charge and follow instructions. For instance, they immediately stop running on the decking outside when asked to do so, understanding that because it is wet, it may be slippery.

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

- Children are provided with challenging opportunities to develop their understanding of mathematical language. They learn to recognise and name common shapes, such as squares and triangles and to count the number of sides. Children begin to use the language of comparison. For example, a child measures a spaceman against a ruler and observes that the ruler is taller.
- Parents are confident their children are safe and well cared for in the nursery. They say they discuss what their children can and cannot do when they start at the setting. Parents are pleased with the daily updates they receive when they collect their children. They appreciate the more detailed information they are sent via the online system, which informs their child's assessment. However, parental partnerships could be strengthened further to improve parental contributions to their child's assessments.
- Key persons know their children well. They establish children's starting points and provide interesting activities to build on previous learning, enabling them to make good progress. Where gaps in learning are identified, staff plan appropriate learning experiences to address these.
- Staff support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities effectively. The special educational needs coordinator has strong links with a range of outside agencies and external professionals, who provide appropriate advice and support for children and their families.
- Children's skills in communication and language are well developed. Staff speak clearly, often repeating words and phrases back to children to support correct

pronunciation. Children say they enjoy stories. They listen attentively, commenting on the actions of the characters. Children delight in using the props, such as the space boots and helmets. They are encouraged to use correct terminology, learning and using the word 'astronaut' rather than 'spaceman'. This helps to expand the vocabulary of the children. Staff question children skilfully but, occasionally, they do not give children sufficient time to formulate a response before supplying an answer.

- Staff ensure that children are well prepared for school. They have created positive connections with schools and other settings children may attend. Information is shared and this helps to ensure a consistent approach to children's learning and care.
- Children have a wide range of opportunities to develop their early writing skills. They use a variety of tools to explore the different effects they can create and develop a correct grip. Older children learn to write their names, helping to prepare them for the next stage of their education.
- Children understand and follow established routines, collecting and returning their lunch boxes to the trolley. They are encouraged to be independent, putting on their own coats before going outside, for example. Children understand what foods help to keep them healthy and why they need to clean their teeth regularly.
- Staff benefit from regular meetings with managers to discuss their practice and training needs. Leaders are reflective, recently changing the configuration of the nursery to meet the changing needs of the children.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The manager and her staff have a thorough understanding of their responsibilities in keeping children safe. They can describe the signs that may suggest a child is at risk of harm, including risks relating to extremism. In all instances, they know who to inform, and the procedures to follow, if they have any concerns about a child's safety or welfare. Clear procedures are in place should an allegation be made against any member of staff, including the leaders. The manager and Trustees have comprehensive systems in place for the recruitment of staff, making sure all are suitable to work with children. Risk assessments are in place to ensure that resources and activities are safe for children to use.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- allow children time to respond to questions to help support their thought processes, thinking and problem-solving skills
- encourage parents to make regular contributions to the online system about

their child's learning and development at home, to support assessment information.

Setting details

Unique reference number	2514811
Local authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	10207866
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 4
Total number of places	36
Number of children on roll	40
Name of registered person	The Athelstan Nursery CIO
Registered person unique reference number	2514810
Telephone number	01424446105
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

The Athelstan Nursery registered in 2019. They operate in Hastings, East Sussex each day from 8.45am to 3.15pm, during term time only. They offer funded places for two-, three- and four-year-old children. There are six members of staff who all hold appropriate qualifications in childcare at level 3 or above. One member of staff has qualified teacher status.

Information about this inspection

Inspector
Jill Thewlis

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the provider 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 her evaluation of the provider.
- The manager and the inspector undertook a learning walk, where the planned learning behind the educational programmes on offer was discussed.
- At suitable times during the inspection, the inspector spoke to staff, parents and children and took their views into account.
- The inspector and the manager observed interactions between adults and children. They discussed the learning that took place.
- The manager and her staff explained their role in safeguarding children to the inspector.
- The inspector viewed a range of documents relating to safeguarding, suitability of staff and record keeping.

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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