

Inspection of Hitchin House Day Nursery

41 Wilbury Way, Hitchin, Hertfordshire SG4 0TW

Inspection date: 23 August 2022

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
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

The warm, welcoming and enthusiastic manager and staff team create a highly ambitious curriculum for all children, who make outstanding progress in their learning and development. Children leave their parents with confidence and demonstrate a clear love for their nursery. Staff are excited to welcome children into their base rooms. Children quickly become immersed in exciting and meaningful activities. Younger babies explore sensory activities. They scoop, pour, pat and bang coloured rice in the trays, using their whole bodies to explore and investigate. These activities encourage babies to become inquisitive learners from an early age.

Sibling relationships are important in this nursery. Children of different ages engage in activities together, creating a home from home feeling. In the garden area, older children spend time with the babies, learning when it is important to take extra care in their movements and play. Children's behaviour is exemplary. They understand staff's expectations. Children are kind to each other and enjoy playing together. Older children explore numbers together, creating their own number sequence problems. They delight as they watch their friends find solutions. They love explaining to staff what they have done, proud of their achievements.

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

- The provider and the management team's dedication to creating an innovative early years provision underpins the nursery's success. The team demonstrate the love they have for the nursery by their enthusiasm throughout the day. Everyone in the nursery is involved in the ongoing development of the provision. The team have a shared vision, making sure every child is seen as an individual and tailoring the teaching to suit all children's learning needs. Additional funding is used successfully to support children's well-being and learning.
- Provision for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities is outstanding. Staff put the necessary adaptations in place quickly to ensure that children enjoy the same curriculum and experiences as their friends. Staff build strong and trusting relationships with parents. They support them throughout their child's journey at the nursery.
- A love of books is embedded across the nursery. Younger babies explore lift-the-flap books and laugh as they lift the barn door to find a horse. Older children have access to a library wall and they competently use a moving ladder to climb and find their books of choice. They enthusiastically get books to share with staff. Children know that books provide information and use those available to extend their own learning even further.
- Children develop an excellent understanding of healthy lifestyles. They are physically active throughout the day, both inside and outdoors. Children use trial

and error methods when exploring the climbing wall. They are proud when they manage to move across it. In the garden, children practice their climbing skills even further on the blocks. They use balance beams to start their climb and once they reach the top, staff are there to support them if needed. Staff encourage children to consider risks, asking them: 'Do you think that is a safe thing to do?' This empowers children to make decisions for themselves.

- The workshop allows children time to explore and express themselves independently. In the water tray, children explore coloured water. They use pipettes to transfer water into test tubes, developing their hand-to-eye coordination and fine-motor skills. Children independently choose their own colours to paint with and become immersed in the activity. They proudly share their creations with staff who praise their efforts, developing their self-esteem.
- Parents speak very highly of the nursery, especially the individual bonds their children have with their key person and the staff within their rooms. Parents delight in sharing their experiences and the progress their child has made during their time at the nursery. Communication is highly effective. Parents comment on the classes run additionally for them and the skills they have learned. Parents state that they would not go anywhere else.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

All staff are very confident in their knowledge of the signs and symptoms that might indicate a child is being abused, including younger and non-verbal children. They have an excellent understanding of what they must do if they have any concerns about a child's well-being or the conduct of a colleague. Recruitment and vetting procedures are rigorous. An extensive induction programme and ongoing supervision ensures all adults are suitable to work with children. A robust policy underpins the robust practice within the nursery.

Setting details

Unique reference number	2570956
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10239583
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	135
Number of children on roll	169
Name of registered person	Hitchin House Day Nursery Ltd
Registered person unique reference number	2570955
Telephone number	07947328188
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

Hitchin House Day Nursery registered in 2020. It operates Monday to Friday, from 7.30am to 6.30pm all year round, apart from bank holidays. The nursery employs over 66 childcare staff, of whom 38 hold appropriate early years qualifications of level 2 or above. It 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 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 their evaluation of the provider.
- The manager joined the inspector on a learning walk and talked to the inspector about their curriculum and what they want their 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 being provided, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact that this was having on children's learning.
- A senior staff member and the inspector carried out joint observations of chosen activities through the day.
- Parents shared their views of the setting with the inspector.
- 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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