

Inspection of Headstart Day and Afterschool Care LTD

Afton Drive, South Ockendon, Essex RM15 5PA

Inspection date: 21 November 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	Outstanding
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What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children have strong bonds with their key person and develop good relationships with their peers. They are greeted with warm cuddles and provided with lots of praise and encouragement throughout the day. Children happily share and take turns with each other. Younger children roll a ball back and forth between each other, smiling and clapping when they are successful. Older children sit together at the lunch table, helping one another serve the food onto their plates.

There is a wide range of resources accessible to children, and they explore their environment well. They play with real food in the role-play area, and have conversations about where the food comes from and what it looks like. Children are introduced to healthy eating through discussions about the ingredients in their food. They use some of these healthy ingredients in their role-play areas. Staff explain how food can change when it is cooked. For example, they discuss how potatoes can make chips or mash.

Children show real enjoyment when they are playing. Younger children have fun exploring the 'cornflour play', putting their hands in and clapping their hands together to see how they stick. Children enjoy dancing and singing songs with musical instruments throughout the day. Older children learn to mix paints together. They ask staff what colours they can make and experiment with mixing and adding new colours.

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

- Children engage well with staff and their environment. Staff enjoy reading and singing with children. Older children re-enact stories they have previously read to other children and staff. They repeat phrases and actions from the story with real excitement.
- Staff plan activities that focus on children's previous experiences, and help to extend their learning further. For example, children learn about different seasons, such as autumn. They recall how they saw some fireworks. When they talk about summer, children say that they have been to the beach and that they went on an aeroplane. Staff ask questions to challenge children's learning, however, they do not always allow time for children to think and respond.
- Children follow the nursery's 'golden rules', which help to set behaviour expectations. They remind one another of the rules and talk about 'kind hands' and say that 'sharing is caring'. Children happily hold hands and take turns throughout the day.
- During mealtimes, children show good independence as they feed themselves. However, they sometimes have to wait for long periods of time before and after they have their meal, and they become restless and unsettled.

- The special educational needs and disabilities coordinator has a deep understanding of how to support individual children. He works closely with staff, parents and health agencies, to ensure that children with additional needs are well supported and make progress. The sensory room enables children to have a quiet, one-to-one time with their key person when required.
- The management team have a clear focus on ensuring staff's well-being is supported. There is a 'well-being champion' in place, and staff can freely access guidance and support when needed. Staff have regular meetings with managers to discuss children's progress and any training opportunities they wish to pursue. Staff comment that they feel well supported by the management team.
- Staff plan activities to celebrate a range of festivals. They ask parents for any information about what they celebrate at home. Some parents have shared the food they eat with the children, which helps to support their learning about cultural differences.
- Staff develop good relationships with parents. They keep parents updated with information about what their children are learning and what they are working on next. They encourage parents to send in photos of what their children have been enjoying at home. Staff use this to extend their learning further at the nursery.
- Parents speak highly of the staff. They feel fully informed about what their children are learning and how to develop their skills further at home. Parents comment that staff are 'polite and welcoming' and 'are brilliant role models who put children's needs first'.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff know the signs and symptoms of abuse and the procedures to follow, if they have concerns about the children in their care. The management team ensures that staff's knowledge of safeguarding is kept up to date by providing regular training opportunities. Staff have a good awareness of wider safeguarding concerns, including county lines and female genital mutilation. They know the actions to take if they have concerns about a member of staff, and the authorities they would report to. The management team have a robust recruitment and induction procedure in place, to ensure that staff are suitable for their role.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- develop staff's interactions with children and ensure they allow children time to think and respond
- improve the organisation of routines, with particular reference to the time before and after meals, so that the length of time children spend waiting is reduced.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY271047
Local authority	Thurrock
Inspection number	10233633
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	78
Number of children on roll	106
Name of registered person	Headstart Day & Afterschool Care Limited
Registered person unique reference number	RP904246
Telephone number	01708 856948
Date of previous inspection	3 March 2017

Information about this early years setting

Headstart Day and Afterschool Care LTD registered in 2003. The nursery employs 24 members of childcare staff. Of these, two members of staff hold an appropriate early years qualification at level 4, 11 at level 3 and four at level 2. The nursery opens Monday to Friday, all year round. Sessions are from 7.30am until 7pm. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Stef Montgomery

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 setting.
- The manager and inspector completed a learning walk together to discuss the areas of learning, their curriculum and what they want children to learn both inside and outside.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation of a group activity with the manager.
- The inspector spoke to children about what they are doing at the nursery.
- The inspector spoke to parents to take account their views of the nursery.
- The inspector looked at relevant documentation, including evidence of staff suitability and training.

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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