

Inspection of Little Hearts Preschool

St. Meryl Junior Middle & Infant School, The Mead, Watford WD19 5BT

Inspection date: 11 January 2023

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 are welcomed into this warm and friendly pre-school. They form strong bonds with staff. Children receive reassurance and cuddles if needed, which helps them to feel safe and secure. Children make good progress in all areas. They are confident learners and familiar with routines in the setting. For example, children know instinctively to gather on the carpet when staff clap their hands. They eagerly join in with a music and movement activity, developing their listening skills as they listen to instructions in the song.

Children develop their independence skills through daily tasks. Older children change into slippers as they arrive at the setting. Young children show progression as they learn to put their coats on. Children develop a concrete understanding of numbers as they explore counting sticks and learn to recognise written numerals. Children develop their fine motor skills. They use tongs to pick up toy dinosaurs and sort them into baskets and practise using scissors. Children show a positive attitude to their learning and show resilience to any setbacks. This helps them to be prepared for the next stage of their education.

Children behave well. Staff have high expectations for their behaviour and gently support children to share resources and understand their emotions. Staff celebrate children's achievements using a 'wow' board and provide positive praise to them. This helps to nurture children's self-esteem.

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

- The managers and staff team deliver an ambitious curriculum. They know the children well and what they need to do next to develop. Children access a wide range of child-initiated and adult-led activities that are based on the children's interests. For example, children role play with superhero characters and princesses in a castle, which stemmed from interests they developed over the holidays.
- There is a strong focus on communication and language. Staff are aware of the impact the COVID-19 pandemic has had on children's speech and language and have amended the curriculum to support this. Staff use sign language, visual cues and song to support children's learning. Staff help children to develop a love for books as they share a story about a tiger that came to tea. Cosy reading areas encourage children to freely explore books. As a result, children are making good progress in their communication and speaking skills.
- Staff interact with the children well and provide interesting activities for children to explore. For example, children explore pasta shapes and use scoops to fill pots. They use moulds to make shapes in the sandpit outside. Occasionally, not all staff take opportunity to extend children's learning on the subject matter

being taught, to provide them with a deeper understanding.

- The managers demonstrate a drive to continually improve the provision to ensure that children have the best learning experiences. For example, there are plans to improve the outdoor learning environment for the children. Managers work hard to create a supportive environment for the staff. Regular supervision and opportunity for focused training enables staff to build on their professional development and meet the needs of the children effectively. Staff report good levels of well-being and feel confident in their roles.
- Children develop a deep understanding of differences and cultures. Parents come in and share experiences of their own cultural celebrations. They share books and children enjoy different foods, such as breads from different countries. This helps children begin to understand what makes them unique.
- Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported. Staff work closely with parents and external agencies to ensure they receive the support they need. Staff are aware of how to support these children and sharply focus teaching strategies to meet their needs. This ensures that children with SEND progress to the best of their ability.
- Parents speak highly of the setting, stating it is a 'lovely, nurturing environment'. They are kept regularly updated about their children's learning and development with the use of an online system and parent consultations. Managers share information with parents about their children's development and ideas about how they can continue this at home.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The managers ensure that children's safety and well-being is a priority. Staff receive regular training and hold discussions in team meetings to keep their knowledge up to date. Staff are confident in their knowledge of the types and signs of abuse. They are clear about how to report a concern, including any allegations made against staff. Daily risk assessments are carried out to ensure equipment and resources are safe. Staff are deployed in all areas to ensure that children are always supervised. Managers have detailed recruitment processes and ensure that those who work with the children have the necessary suitability checks.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- support staff to make the most of every opportunity to extend children's learning, to develop a deeper understanding.

Setting details

Unique reference number	2604761
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10262825
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	30
Number of children on roll	45
Name of registered person	LH Pre-school Limited
Registered person unique reference number	2604762
Telephone number	07546928589
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

Little Hearts Preschool re-registered in 2020. It is operated by LH Preschools Ltd. It employs six members of staff. Of these, five hold an appropriate qualification at level 3 or above. It operates between 9am and 3pm from Monday to Friday, during term time only. The pre-school provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Emily Woodhead

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 manager and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the setting.
- The manager joined the inspector on a learning walk. She talked to the inspector about the curriculum.
- The inspector observed the quality of education being provided, indoors and outdoors. She discussed children's progress with staff.
- The manager and inspector carried out a joint observation.
- The inspector looked at relevant documentation. This included evidence of staff suitability, staff training records and safeguarding documents.
- The inspector spoke to parents during the inspection and took account of written feedback provided.

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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