

# Inspection of Play Aloud Samuel Lucas

Samuel Lucas Junior Middle And Infant School, Gaping Lane, Hitchin SG5 2JQ

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Inspection date:

30 January 2023

**The quality and  
standards of early  
years provision**

**This  
inspection**

**Met**

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Previous  
inspection

Good

## What is it like to attend this early years setting?

### This provision meets requirements

Children relish their time at this vibrant, welcoming setting. Thoughtful procedures, such as designated base areas for each age group, help children to settle quickly and feel secure and confident. Children build warm relationships with staff. They mirror the excellent example set by staff and show genuine concern and consideration for one another. They readily share toys and competently organise their play. This sensitive interaction supports children in building the skills that aid their learning. Thoughtful daily routines help to build children's confidence. For example, each day, older children read to the younger ones. Both age groups enjoy this time, showing respect and courtesy as they read and listen.

Staff are sensitive to the possible effects of the COVID-19 lockdowns. They offer extra support to children in dealing with transition times and in understanding and managing their behaviour. Children are learning about healthy practices. They listen to stories that help them understand the importance of cleaning their teeth. Children are excited about their play and persevere, particularly when learning new skills. For instance, children work hard to catch a ball in hooped rackets. They are pleased when they succeed and congratulate each other, going on to count the number of times they catch the ball.

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

- The manager demonstrates a genuine enjoyment of her work. Staff reflect her enthusiasm and are excited, diligent and sensitive in their interactions with children. The manager is dedicated to the continuous improvement of the setting and identifies good practice and areas for further development. For instance, she has plans to add low coat hooks so that younger children can be more independent in managing their coats and belongings.
- Staff well-being is sensitively considered and the manager offers regular, practical supervision, where staff can discuss any concerns and further develop their practice. The manager aids staff in supporting children and in ensuring that each child is offered a good balance of opportunities to play, relax and build on the skills that support their learning.
- Partnership working with the school is exemplary. The manager and staff take time to work closely with the headteacher and class teachers. They understand children's needs and follow the same procedures used by the school. Staff pay similar attention to building friendly, professional relationships with parents. These excellent partnerships ensure a very good continuity of care for children and support all involved in working together to promote children's development and well-being.
- Staff support children in building a love of books. Children listen intently as a

staff member reads with animation and enthusiasm. The children eagerly share and hold up props and puppets at the right time, confidently joining in with repeated words and predicting what happens next.

- Staff pay attention to what children are saying and encourage them to expand on their conversations. This supports children's communication skills and they talk confidently, for example, when explaining their play to staff and other children.
- Staff interact well with the children, helping them to relax and enjoy their time at the setting. For instance, children explore a role-play doctor's set. They laugh and chatter animatedly as they pretend to give injections and listen to a staff member's heartbeat.
- Children have many practical opportunities that support them in understanding other beliefs and ways of life. For example, they work together to make handprints to decorate a dragon for Chinese New Year. They use boxes to make a large dragon and go on to research music and traditional dances, performing these for other children.
- Children learn to state their views and to consider the views and needs of others. Staff include children in making decisions, such as which new resources to purchase. Children state whether they have enjoyed the activities and staff use this feedback when planning further.
- Parents speak highly of the setting. They praise staff and feel that they genuinely understand and include each child. They report that staff use a number of ways to communicate with parents, ensuring that parents always know what children have been doing and can update staff at any time.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The manager takes the setting's role in safeguarding children very seriously. She makes sure that staff consider all aspects of children's safety and welfare, such as the layout of the hall and the effectiveness of their policies. Staff show a very clear understanding of safeguarding, keeping this knowledge up to date through completing training and engaging in discussions during daily staff meetings. Additionally, staff understand wider safeguarding issues, such as the effects of radicalisation and extreme practices. They appreciate the possible risks associated with use of the internet and take effective action to protect children and to help them understand how to use the internet safely.

## Setting details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	EY486291
<b>Local authority</b>	Hertfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10244429
<b>Type of provision</b>	Childcare on non-domestic premises
<b>Registers</b>	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
<b>Day care type</b>	Out-of-school day care
<b>Age range of children at time of inspection</b>	5 to 10
<b>Total number of places</b>	100
<b>Number of children on roll</b>	240
<b>Name of registered person</b>	Play Aloud Ltd
<b>Registered person unique reference number</b>	RP545792
<b>Telephone number</b>	07535784783
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	6 February 2017

## Information about this early years setting

Play Aloud Samuel Lucas registered in 2015. The club employs 16 members of childcare staff. Of these, three hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 or above. The club opens from Monday to Friday, during term time only. Sessions are from 7.30am until 8.55am and from 3.15pm until 6pm.

## Information about this inspection

**Inspector**  
Kelly Eyre

## 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 inspector viewed all areas of the setting used for childcare. She looked at relevant documentation, including staff suitability checks.
- Meetings were held with the manager and a supporting manager.
- The inspector observed staff interaction with children during activities inside and outside. She reviewed an activity with the manager, to look at how children are engaged and how staff are supported.
- The inspector talked to children and staff at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The inspector considered the views of parents through talking with them and viewing their written feedback.

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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