

Inspection of Apple Green Montessori Preschool

Hockerill Sports & Social Club, Beldams Lane, Bishop's Stortford CM23 5LG

Inspection date: 3 February 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 enjoy a wealth of learning opportunities in this stimulating environment. They are excited to arrive, and keen to engage in activities both indoors and in the exciting garden area. Children take an active role in planning the environment. They contribute ideas in their scrapbook about activities they enjoy, and topics they wish to learn more about. Management and staff use this information to provide learning opportunities to support children's development in their chosen areas.

Children demonstrate high levels of confidence in the pre-school. They engage extremely well with visitors, chatting to them about their families and engaging them in play. Staff support children to develop a sense of pride in their abilities. They encourage them to share their skills and talents in group activities. For example, children delight at the praise they receive when demonstrating the yoga positions they have learned.

Children show high levels of curiosity. Staff provide an array of versatile resources and supervise children well, encouraging them to explore their ideas. For example, children are encouraged to make their own modelling dough. They help themselves to flour, water and paints, and examine the various textures and colours of the dough they create.

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

- Staff make good use of children's daily routines to support and extend their learning. For example, at snack time, children select cards with their names on. Staff then use the remaining cards to support children in identifying the names of their friends who have not had a snack.
- Staff monitor children's progress well. They have a clear understanding of the Montessori approach and how this supports children's learning across the early years foundation stage (EYFS). Staff complete regular assessments against both the Montessori curriculum and the EYFS. This information is shared with parents electronically, along with ideas to further support children's learning at home.
- Staff place sharp focus on children's emotional well-being. They encourage children to explore their feelings through age-appropriate activities. For example, during story sessions, staff encourage children to identify how the various characters may be feeling. They then discuss together the possible reasons for this.
- Children of all ages display high levels of independence. Staff encourage them to complete age-appropriate tasks with minimal assistance. For example, children tidy away their pottery plates after meals and snacks before washing their hands and faces. They confidently put on their coats and shoes before playing outdoors. This prepares children well for the routines of school.

- Children with special educational needs and /or disabilities are well supported in the pre-school. Staff demonstrate deep knowledge of the children in their care and use this to support their learning. The manager works closely with families to guide them through the referral process. She engages well with other professionals to provide additional support to meet children's individual needs.
- Children are kind and considerate towards one another, cooperating well during activities. Staff are consistent in their approach to behaviour management. They support children's understanding of inappropriate behaviour by explaining the impact their actions may have on others.
- Staff place sharp focus on developing children's communication and language skills. They engage well with children, and provide opportunities for them to explore new vocabulary. For example, children enjoy daily nature walks. Staff encourage them to discuss their surroundings, describing the 'crunchy' leaves and the 'squelchy' mud. However, the same high-quality interactions are not always used to support children's mathematical development.
- The manager reflects well on all areas of her practice. She seeks feedback from parents and staff, and uses her findings to make well informed changes. The manager conducts regular appraisals on all staff to identify areas for development. Staff have access to online and face-to-face training opportunities. This ensures their knowledge remains up to date. However, staff would benefit from more robust methods of coaching and mentoring.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Management and staff have a strong understanding of their responsibilities to keep children safe. They confidently discuss the signs and symptoms that could indicate a child is at risk of harm. Both management and staff have a clear understanding of the correct process to follow when reporting concerns. They complete comprehensive risk assessments of all areas of the setting to ensure the environment is safe for all children. The manager has robust recruitment procedures in place to ensure all staff are suitable to work with children.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- better support children's mathematical development during planned activities and sessions of free play
- enhance methods of coaching to support staff to raise the quality of their teaching to a consistently high level.

Setting details

Unique reference number	2600158
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10265356
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	32
Number of children on roll	36
Name of registered person	Apple Green Montessori Preschool Limited
Registered person unique reference number	2600160
Telephone number	07788913444
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

Apple Green Montessori Preschool registered in 2020 and is situated in Bishop's Stortford. The setting employs six members of childcare staff. Of these, four hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 and above. The setting is open from 8am until 4pm Monday to Friday during term time. It provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Antonia Campbell

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 considered the views of parents by speaking to several during the inspection and reviewing feedback letters.
- The inspector looked at relevant documents, including evidence of the suitability of all staff.
- The inspector observed the interactions between staff and children during activities.
- The inspector observed the quality of teaching to assess the impact on children's learning.
- The inspector and the manager completed a joint observation of an activity to assess the quality of teaching.
- The inspector held discussions with staff about the monitoring of learning and development in the setting, and tracked the progress of several children.

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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