

Inspection of Tracks Autism

Tracks House, Boulton Road, Stevenage, Hertfordshire SG1 4QX

Inspection date: 11 July 2023

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
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The quality of education	Outstanding
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Inadequate

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is outstanding

Children benefit hugely from the exceptional support they receive at this specialist provision. They separate from their parents and carers with ease at the start of the day. The strong dialogue between staff and parents at drop off helps staff to adapt the session to suit the individual needs of each child. For instance, if staff know that children have woken early in the morning, they adapt their expectations and allow children time to relax.

All children make the best possible progress at the setting, particularly in their communication skills, which are at the heart of the curriculum. Staff use a wide range of communication methods with children who are unable to communicate verbally. For example, they use visual images and objects to help children to understand the routine of the session. This supports children to recognise what is happening next and prepare for this transition.

Children's confidence quickly grows and they become more independent in using their rapidly increasing communication skills. This confidence supports them to communicate effectively with a wider range of people. For instance, children use picture cards to engage with visitors to the setting, showing them which activity they would like to complete next, taking the visitors by the hand to join in with their play.

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

- The exceptionally strong staff team respond instinctively to each child's needs. Not only do staff know their own key children, they understand the needs of all children who attend. They adapt their interactions with children to meet each child's abilities and needs. For instance, they differentiate snack time to encourage children to choose their own snack independently, either by pointing at a picture, choosing an item or asking using their verbal skills. This enables all children to feel thoroughly included in the experience.
- Staff are fully aware of each child's cues, such as when they are becoming frustrated. They respond immediately to these behaviours and provide appropriate support, helping children to learn to manage their own emotions in a caring and sensitive manner. This helps to keep children safe and enables them to feel secure in their surroundings and form strong bonds with the staff team.
- The staff are passionate and dedicated to their roles. They support one another extremely well. The principal leads by example, acting as an exceptional role model to the staff team. Professional development happens spontaneously through discussions, as well as through more formal opportunities. As a result, staff knowledge grows and interactions with children are consistently strong and purposeful.

- Parents praise the staff and speak positively about the setting. They feel fully supported. The centre manager provides on-site family support to help parents to access additional funding and answer their queries. Parents benefit from sharing their experiences with one another. This valuable support network benefits the whole family, as well as the children who attend.
- Activities are purposefully planned and delivered highly effectively. Staff use the thoughtfully planned and sharply focused curriculum to provide children with motivating and enjoyable opportunities to build on their existing skills. This is seamlessly adjusted to meet each child's needs and provide them with appropriate levels of challenge. Staff recognise when children are deeply engaged and use these opportunities spontaneously to maximise the learning which takes place.
- Children thoroughly enjoy the wealth of physical activities on offer and benefit hugely from a range of sensory experiences. They feel the vibrations of the drum as they each take a turn during a whole group story session, which they are all thoroughly engrossed in. Children demonstrate their enjoyment as they bounce on trampolines. Staff use these opportunities exceptionally well to promote children's social interactions and build their turn-taking skills. For example, they use visual cues to remind children that it is their friend's turn first, then it is their turn. Staff praise children for 'good waiting' and have clear and consistent boundaries, which all children respond well to.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The action from the last inspection has been thoroughly addressed and a more robust system for checking trustees and reporting changes to Ofsted is now in place. Staff and trustees all complete sharply targeted safeguarding training as part of their thorough inductions. Staff have an extremely strong understanding of the possible signs of abuse and neglect. In-depth risk assessments are completed to ensure children remain safe. Those with lead safeguarding roles fulfil these well. Staff liaise with other agencies where necessary, recognising the importance of collaborative working. Staff have their ongoing suitability checked as part of their annual appraisal process.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY485394
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10278146
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Day care type	Sessional day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	2 to 5
Total number of places	31
Number of children on roll	31
Name of registered person	Tracks (Autism)
Registered person unique reference number	RP900876
Telephone number	0300 123 1913
Date of previous inspection	18 January 2023

Information about this early years setting

Tracks Autism registered in 2015. The setting employs eight members of childcare staff. Of these, six hold appropriate early years qualifications, including two with qualified teacher status. The setting opens from Monday to Thursday, 39 weeks of the year. Sessions are from 9.30am until midday on Monday, and 9.30am until 2.30pm on Tuesday. On Wednesday and Thursday, sessions are from 9.30am until midday, and 1pm until 4pm.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Jenny Hardy

Inspection activities

- The inspector discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the provider and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the provider.
- The inspector and principal discussed the curriculum on offer and considered the impact of this on children's learning and development.
- Parents spoke to the inspector about their experiences and the inspector took their views into account.
- The principal and inspector jointly observed staff interacting with children. They discussed the impact of these interactions on children.
- Staff and children interacted with the inspector at appropriate times throughout the inspection.
- The inspector viewed a range of documentation and checked the suitability of staff, volunteers and trustees.

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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