

Inspection of Brock House Nursery School

6 Lemsford Road, St. Albans, Hertfordshire AL1 3PB

Inspection date: 23 November 2023

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

The provision is good

Children are warmly welcomed as they arrive at this nursery. Parents are given time to share important information about their children so staff can meet their needs effectively. Children separate well from their parents and show strong bonds with their key person, which helps them to feel safe and secure.

Throughout the nursery, children show they are confident. They enjoy exploring their environment and the range of resources that reflect their interests. For example, babies enjoy filling and emptying baskets with different objects such as metal tins. Staff provide activities that meet the needs of the children. For example, they encourage pre-school children to take part in scissor activities and moulding dough. This helps children to develop the muscles they need to support their early writing skills.

Staff deliver effective activities aimed at nurturing children's self-esteem and confidence. Children enjoy repeating daily affirmations, such as 'I am strong', which contributes to developing a positive self-image. Staff value and respect children's choices, listening attentively to them. For example, children identify what resources they would like out and record this on a chart. This helps children to feel valued and encourages them to shape their own learning and development. Children behave well. They follow the good example set by staff, who gently remind them of the rules about sharing and taking turns.

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

- Staff plan a sequenced and challenging curriculum aimed at building on children's learning and development. Activities are planned based on children's interests, which helps children to be engaged in their learning environment. Children show positive attitudes to their learning. However, the curriculum is not always tailored to support younger children's individual needs, which results in them sometimes being less engaged.
- Staff support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) well. They work closely with a range of external professionals, sharing strategies to support the learning needs of children. Staff monitor children with emerging developmental concerns and provide bespoke support to families. As a result, children with SEND are making good progress.
- Transitions are managed well throughout the nursery. Children have settling-in sessions as they move to new rooms. Their key person shares important information with their new key person. Parents are fully involved throughout this process. In addition, daily routines are well organised. Staff support children to move smoothly from inside to outdoors and they manage transitions between lunch and sleep times seamlessly.

- Children show good levels of independence as they competently take their coats off and change into their indoor shoes. However, staff have not considered that older children are capable of doing more. Children do not have enough opportunities to take responsibility for carrying out personal tasks or making some decisions for themselves.
- Staff support children to build on their communication and language. They use a range of strategies to increase the number of new words children hear throughout the nursery. Staff use simple language to describe what they are doing as they play alongside babies. They say 'stacking' as babies stack cups on top of each other. Staff routinely share stories with children, promoting children's interest and understanding in words and books.
- Partnerships with parents are well established. Parents speak highly of the nursery, stating that, 'Staff create a safe, fun and engaging environment,' that their children 'thrive in'. Parents are kept up to date with their child's learning and development with parents' evenings and daily handover discussions. Events at the nursery, such as Christmas parties and annual fun days, help to build a positive community for families that use the nursery.
- The principal and her team show a passion and dedication to their roles. They work cohesively together and have a clear vision for continuous improvement to ensure that children receive high-quality care. Staff practice is closely monitored with regular supervision meetings. Staff's well-being is a focus for the principal. Activities, such as 'employee of the month' and a 'thank you' board, help staff feel valued and appreciated.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff show a secure understanding of how to keep children safe. There are clear procedures for staff to follow should they need to report a concern about the welfare of a child. They know to ensure that records are accurate and swiftly reported. Staff know the potential signs and symptoms of abuse, including neglect and radicalisation. Daily risk assessments are carried out to check that the nursery is free from hazards, and routine fire drills are practised so children and staff are familiar with the procedure. The principal has robust recruitment processes in place to ensure that suitable staff are employed.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- develop a sharper focus in the curriculum to ensure it supports the individual learning needs of younger children in the nursery
- support staff to encourage older children to do more for themselves to develop their independence even further.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY234600
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10300971
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	1 to 4
Total number of places	70
Number of children on roll	63
Name of registered person	Brock House Nursery School Ltd
Registered person unique reference number	RP520753
Telephone number	01727 830469
Date of previous inspection	3 January 2018

Information about this early years setting

Brock House Nursery School registered in 1992. It employs 18 members of childcare staff. Of these, 13 hold relevant qualifications from level 2 to level 6. One member of staff has early years professional status. The nursery school opens from 7.30am until 6.45pm, Monday to Friday for 51 weeks of the year. It 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 nursery received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the principal and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the nursery.
- The principal 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 principal and inspector carried out a joint observation.
- The inspector looked at relevant documentation. This included evidence of staff suitability, staff 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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