

Inspection of The Crescent Playgroup

St.Lukes Church Hall, The Crescent,Bricket Wood, St Albans, Hertfordshire AL2 3NF

Inspection date: 10 January 2024

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 excited to arrive and settle well at this friendly playgroup. The manager and staff have a nurturing approach and provide an abundance of support. This enables children to feel secure in their new environment. Staff demonstrate a deep understanding of children's early experiences and interests. They use this knowledge to create a stimulating learning environment that supports the needs of all children who attend. This ensures that children remain deeply engaged in meaningful play throughout their time at the playgroup.

Children form close bonds with each other. Staff make good use of regular group sessions to encourage children to get to know one another and establish friendships. Children are kind and helpful and demonstrate empathy towards others. For example, they hold the hands of their friends to warm them up after playing outdoors.

Children of all ages demonstrate high levels of independence. The manager and staff provide plenty of opportunities for children to complete age-appropriate tasks. For example, they encourage children to put their own coats and boots on before going outside. Children pour their own drinks at meal and snack times and confidently use brooms to help sweep up after playing with sand.

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

- Relationships between staff and parents are of a high standard. Parents receive continuous updates on children's progress. They attend regular consultation sessions and gather ideas about how to support children's learning at home. Parents are complimentary about staff and the nurturing care they provide. They acknowledge the positive impact this has on children's progress and well-being.
- Staff place sharp focus on developing children's communication skills. They create regular opportunities for children to engage in group discussions, and they interact well with children during all activities. The manager adopts additional age-appropriate strategies to further support children's language development. For example, children take part in regular sessions to develop their early reading skills, to prepare them for their next stage of learning.
- The manager and staff understand how children learn best. They are always on hand to offer support, creating an environment where perseverance is valued. For example, when children struggle in a construction activity, staff offer encouragement and advice. Children proudly show off their accomplishments and receive an abundance of praise for their efforts and achievements.
- Staff adapt activities well to meet the learning needs of all children who attend. Their understanding of individual children ensures that activities are made suitably challenging. For example, children are deeply engaged in a sand activity.

Young children count the scoops of sand they place in various vessels. They explore concepts such as capacity by determining when containers are 'full' and 'empty'. Older children, as well as the most able, identify numbers that are hidden in the sand. They are encouraged to make links to numbers that are significant to them, such as their age and that of their friends.

- Children's learning is well sequenced and builds on what they can already do. For example, children strengthen their hand muscles by creating characters and shapes using modelling dough. Staff then encourage children to develop their fine motor skills further by using paint pens to draw pictures and follow patterns. Once confident, children follow the outlines of letters and shapes using pens, building their understanding of how to hold them correctly.
- The manager and staff have a strong understanding of their role in keeping children safe. They demonstrate good knowledge of the signs and symptoms that can indicate a child is at risk from harm. Staff confidently discuss the correct process to follow if they have safeguarding concerns. They complete regular, robust risk assessments of all areas of the playgroup.
- Children behave well in the playgroup and are learning to resolve conflicts independently. For example, when children try to sit at the same space for lunch, they both move over. They discuss how, if they each sit on one side, they can share the chair. However, on occasion, staff do not fully support children's understanding of the consequences inappropriate actions may have on themselves and others.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts children's interests first.

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 establish appropriate and consistent methods in developing children's understanding of the consequences of inappropriate actions.

Setting details

Unique reference number	123582
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10305426
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 4
Total number of places	34
Number of children on roll	31
Name of registered person	The Crescent Playgroup Committee
Registered person unique reference number	RP523324
Telephone number	07516886674
Date of previous inspection	21 February 2018

Information about this early years setting

The Crescent Playgroup registered in 1993. The playgroup employs seven members of childcare staff. Of these, four hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 or above, including one who holds early years teacher status. The playgroup opens from Tuesday to Friday, during term time only. Sessions are from 9.15am to 2.30pm. The playgroup 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.
- 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 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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