

Inspection of Spring - Harlequin

Spa Road, Witham, Essex CM8 1NA

Inspection date: 25 January 2024

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Good

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children are happy and settled in this welcoming environment. They develop close relationships with the kind and nurturing staff, helping them to feel safe and secure. Babies contentedly snuggle up to staff and are comforted by their affection. Staff know and follow their care routines well, ensuring their individual needs are met. Older children initiate conversations with staff, confidently talking about their experiences outside of the nursery. Staff support children in their independence. For example, children make their own play choices, learn to wash their hands, feed themselves with cutlery and put on their coats and shoes.

Children are active learners and enjoy exploring the environment and range of activities. Babies enjoy using their hands to feel the different textures of paint, foamy soap and pasta. Older children use small shovels to dig and fill containers with mud and sand, mixing in water to make 'pies'. They delight as they find worms and watch quietly as a robin appears in the garden.

Children benefit from plenty of opportunities to develop their physical skills. For example, they enthusiastically peddle themselves around the garden on tricycles, play on the slide and balance on tyres, helping to build and strengthen their muscles. Older children use scissors and manipulate dough using cutters and knives. This helps to develop their hand muscles and support their early writing skills.

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

- The dedicated manager has a clear vision for the nursery. She is a strong leader and works closely with her committed staff team to ensure children receive high-quality care and learning experiences. Parents advise that children enjoy attending and are supported well to make progress. The manager encourages staff to undertake additional training to enhance their knowledge and skills. She places a high value on the staff's well-being and staff advise they feel well supported.
- Staff use the nursery's 'golden rules' to help children understand the behaviour expectations. Children's behaviour is good. They are respectful, share the resources and play together well. Staff praise children for their efforts and achievements. This helps to promote their confidence and self-esteem. The manager and staff place a strong focus on helping children talk about their emotions. For example, younger children use mirrors to look at their different facial expressions and older children use colours to help them explain how they are feeling.
- Staff support children's communication and language skills effectively. They respond to babies as they babble, using words and gestures. Staff talk to

children as they engage with activities. They speak slowly and clearly and introduce new words such as 'project' and 'hibernate'. These interactions help all children to make good progress in their communication and language development.

- Children of all ages enjoy books. Babies snuggle up to staff, who encourage them to lift the flaps and point to items as they share board books together. Older children access books freely in the cosy book area. They sit quietly, carefully turn the pages and look with interest at the pictures. Staff read stories with enthusiasm and children join in with familiar words and phrases. This helps to support children's emerging literacy skills.
- Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported well. The manager is the special educational needs coordinator and she works closely with parents and professionals to ensure children receive the additional help they need. This help children to make good progress in their development. Additional funding is used effectively to support children's individual needs, such as through the purchase of specific resources and additional one-to-one support.
- Overall, staff plan a well-sequenced and challenging curriculum. They have clear intentions about what they want children to learn as they transition through the nursery. Children experience a broad range of learning opportunities to help them make progress in all areas of learning. However, staff do not always ensure that their teaching extends children's learning as far as possible, to help them make the most progress.
- Staff know children well. They use assessment to identify where children are in their development. However, activities are often planned to support children's interests and do not precisely focus on what children need to learn next in their sequence of development.

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:

- promote further development of staff's teaching skills to extend children's learning as far as possible
- support staff to focus more precisely on what children need to learn next when they plan activities, to help them make the best possible progress.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY539462
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10316839
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	1 to 4
Total number of places	37
Number of children on roll	58
Name of registered person	Action For Children Developments Ltd
Registered person unique reference number	RP539433
Telephone number	01376 535275
Date of previous inspection	16 May 2018

Information about this early years setting

Spring - Harlequin registered in 2016. The nursery employs 10 members of childcare staff. Of these, eight hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 2 and above. The nursery opens from Monday to Friday, all year round. Sessions run from 8am to 6pm. The nursery receives funding for early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Marisa White

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 manager and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the provider.
- The manager joined the inspector on a learning walk and talked to the inspector about their curriculum and what they want their children to learn.
- The inspector observed the quality of education being provided, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact that this was having on children's learning.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation of a group activity with the manager.
- The inspector talked to staff at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The inspector observed the interactions between staff and children.
- The inspector spoke to several parents during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The inspector looked at relevant documentation and reviewed evidence of the suitability of staff working in the nursery.

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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