

Inspection of Mill Lane Pre-School Association

United Reformed Church Hall, Mill Lane, Broxbourne, Hertfordshire EN10 7BQ

Inspection date: 23 January 2024

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Staff prepare carefully for children's arrival, laying out resources and activities that relate to their learning needs and reflect their particular interests. Even those children who are new to the setting come in happily and quickly settle. They have strong relationships with their key person and other staff, who offer children close reassurance wherever needed. Staff have high expectations of children's behaviour and communicate these clearly to all children so that they know what is expected of them. Children are kind towards their friends and recognise the impact of their actions. For example, if they bump someone else, they apologise and check on their welfare.

Staff plan a broad range of experiences and activities that help children to develop across the areas of learning. Children enjoy much of the learning on offer and engage readily with different opportunities. They listen to stories, sing songs and engage in action rhymes with enthusiasm, developing their understanding of spoken and sung language. Staff clearly understand how to sequence children's learning in a range of areas, particularly their physical development. For instance, staff help children to press and roll dough and to draw freely on large pieces of paper to support the physical skills they need to begin writing. They help children to develop coordination as they balance and jump between blocks. Children roll, climb and crawl through soft-play resources, negotiating objects with skill.

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

- The committee has been through some changes. Committee members are enthusiastic and keen to continue to improve their understanding of their role. Together with the manager, they provide careful and effective oversight of the day-to-day running of the pre-school. They have a clear vision for further improvements and provide supportive supervision to staff. This underpins the strong daily practice.
- Staff speak positively about the support they receive to carry out their role. They describe how they work as a team to plan for children's development. This helps them to know the needs of all children in the setting beyond their key group and to minimise the effect of any staff absences. Staff are also able to identify and respond to any signs that a child is not progressing as expected. They make careful assessments and involve relevant professionals to ensure that interventions are necessary, timely and beneficial.
- Staff know the individual needs, likes and dislikes of the children they care for. They understand what they want children to learn and have developed strong relationships with parents and carers to help them build on children's knowledge and skills from the start. Children who are new to the setting settle with ease. Parents praise the care and education their children receive and feel well

informed about the things their children do at pre-school. They comment positively on the progress their children make at pre-school.

- Children are confident as they interact with adults who are interested in things that they have done. Staff prepare a range of activities linked to animals, reflecting the particular interests of children who regularly visit a local wildlife park. Children confidently share their knowledge; they know that camels live where there is sand and that sharks swim in water. Staff place a high priority on children's emotional security. Children are able to express their feelings, and staff take time to find out about things that may affect their day. This supports them to help children to express and begin to regulate their own emotions.
- Overall, staff understand the intentions of the activity they are delivering and how these support children to know more over time. At times, in their enthusiasm to introduce new learning, staff talk over children and do not always adapt opportunities for quieter children to listen to language, process what they have heard and respond in their own time.
- In some instances, staff do not prepare fully for learning opportunities. For example, they do not ensure they have enough individual resources for the number of children who wish to take part, or ensure they are familiar with a book that they read to children. This leads to some delay in delivering the activity, and, at times, the learning intentions are not fully delivered. However, staff readily reflect on experiences that have taken place, to identify areas for improvement. This demonstrates that they have strong capacity to improve.

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 understand more specifically how children process conversational language, to give them time to develop their own ideas and respond accordingly
- help staff to more carefully consider the resources they use when planning learning experiences, to meet the desired learning intentions during some adult-led activities.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY281631
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10279122
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	23
Name of registered person	Mill Lane Pre-School Association Committee
Registered person unique reference number	RP520712
Telephone number	01992 466971
Date of previous inspection	31 January 2023

Information about this early years setting

Mill Lane Pre-School Association has been operating since 1964. The pre-school employs five members of childcare staff, four of whom hold an appropriate early years qualification at level 3 and one of whom holds a qualification at level 5. The pre-school opens Monday to Friday, term time only. Sessions run from 9am to midday, with the exception of Thursday, when sessions run from 9am to 3pm. The pre-school provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Naomi Brown

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 viewed the provision and discussed the safety and suitability of the premises.
- 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.
- Children told the inspector about what they like to do when they are at pre-school.
- The inspector talked to staff at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The inspector spoke with the nominated individual about the leadership and management of the pre-school.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation of a group activity with the manager.
- The manager showed the inspector documentation to demonstrate the suitability of staff.
- The inspector took account of parents' views during the inspection.

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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