

# Inspection of Grasshoppers Day Nursery (St Albans)

20 York Road, St Albans, Hertfordshire AL1 4PL

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Inspection date: 6 February 2024

**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 Outstanding

## **What is it like to attend this early years setting?**

### **The provision is outstanding**

The manager supports her staff to implement a curriculum that focuses on individual children. It is planned, sequenced and securely embedded across all areas of learning. Children thrive in this welcoming, highly motivating and inclusive environment. They develop extremely positive attitudes to their play and learning. Staff are warm and friendly as they greet children on arrival and demonstrate a genuine interest in what children want to tell them. This helps children to feel particularly secure.

Staff's quality of teaching is exemplary across the whole team. Their interactions with children are excellent, such as during a story or while acting out a 'bear hunt'. Children of all ages consistently demonstrate extremely high levels of interest, perseverance and deep engagement. Staff provide children with enhanced learning opportunities. For example, pre-school children building outdoors with wood and soil confidently use tape measures to work out how long their constructions are. Their learning is enhanced as staff support them to use maps to look at, and identify, different buildings in other parts of the world. This increases children's vocabulary and their awareness of the wider world.

Staff are wonderful role models. Children's behaviour is excellent. Staff consistently help children to work with their peers and solve things for themselves. Children begin to recognise the impact their behaviour has on others and they are extremely quick to support and guide their peers. Young babies demonstrate that they are settled and curious to explore. They build strong attachments to staff and confidently join in during activities, such as 'sing and sign'. Staff praise young children delightfully as the children watch and copy staff demonstrating different signs. This significantly raises children's self-esteem and confidence and helps develop early communication skills.

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

- The manager and her staff are committed to ensuring that all children attending, including children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are provided with the best possible care and education to secure future success. Parents have excellent opportunities to work with their key person, including regular face-to-face and online meetings to talk about their children's progress and achievements. This promotes consistency and helps to identify quickly any gaps in children's learning that can be addressed with interventions. The relationships built between children, their key person and their co-key person are exceptional. This helps to form incredibly strong bonds.
- The manager and staff provide a highly effective and ambitious curriculum that consistently builds on what children already know and can do. Children's starting

points and current levels of achievement are known by their key person, their co-key person and other staff working with them. This has a highly effective impact on children's development because all staff are able to extend the learning of individual children.

- Children are extremely good communicators and they have a lot of fun. They demonstrate their thoughts and ideas to staff with confidence. For example, children in the pre-school use their imaginations, pretending to get ready for a holiday to Egypt. They create individual passports as they talk about their experiences and ideas with great interest. Children demonstrate their understanding of rules. For example, they explain to the inspector that without a passport, she is unable to travel with them.
- The manager leads the staff team exceptionally well. Staff are extremely complimentary about her and the impact she has had on the setting. They praise her for the support and care she gives them. Staff's professional development is highly promoted. For example, they are very well supported with regular supervision and coaching. When concerns do arise, the manager and wider leadership team manage these quickly and consistently.
- Children's personal, social and emotional development is excellent. For example, young babies find the photo cards for their peers, as well as their own, as they prepare for their morning snack. Adults skilfully model and guide children to develop their independence. For example, young children are helped to wash their faces, while looking in mirrors at the 'snuffle stations' that are in all rooms, including outdoor areas. This consistent guidance helps children to look after themselves. From a young age, they develop awareness of their personal needs and build a strong and positive sense of themselves.
- Staff's health and welfare is a priority for the manager and wider leadership of the organisation. Their focus on supporting and helping staff is excellent. This promotes staff's well-being and has an extremely positive impact on the setting overall. Staff are rewarded and have their good work recognised. Staff, including apprentices, say they feel valued and respected. They comment that they are happy working at the nursery.
- Opportunities for children to learn outdoors are extremely good. With the exception of young babies, who enjoy daily opportunities for fresh air and exercise, children make choices to play inside or out. They explore a superb range of resources, which enhances their physical development. Staff arrange outings and introduce children to important members of their society, such as older people and librarians. Children learn about foodbanks and practise eco-friendly ideas, such as walking to nursery. This helps to broaden children's knowledge and experiences.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

## Setting details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	EY459397
<b>Local authority</b>	Hertfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10326218
<b>Type of provision</b>	Childcare on non-domestic premises
<b>Registers</b>	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
<b>Day care type</b>	Full day care
<b>Age range of children at time of inspection</b>	0 to 4
<b>Total number of places</b>	64
<b>Number of children on roll</b>	62
<b>Name of registered person</b>	Childbase Partnership Limited
<b>Registered person unique reference number</b>	RP900830
<b>Telephone number</b>	01727 852097
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	17 April 2018

## Information about this early years setting

Grasshoppers Day Nursery (St Albans) registered in 2013. The nursery employs 42 members of childcare staff, 21 of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 or above. The nursery opens Monday to Friday, all year round, from 7.30am until 6.30pm, excluding bank holidays. The nursery provides funded early education for three- and four-year-old children.

## Information about this inspection

### Inspector

Jo Rowley

## 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 provision.
- The manager and the inspector held a learning discussion together to understand how the curriculum is organised.
- The inspector interacted with children throughout the inspection. The inspector observed staff's interactions with children during an adult-led activity and reviewed this with the manager.
- The inspector spoke to a number of parents during the inspection and took their views and feedback into account.
- A leadership meeting was held with the manager and a number of staff from the wider leadership team. The inspector reviewed a sample of documentation, including evidence of staff suitability, and first-aid arrangements.

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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