

Inspection of Holmer Pre-School

Holmer Church of England Academy, Holmer Road, HEREFORD HR4 9RX

Inspection date: 14 March 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

Children are extremely happy and thoroughly enjoy their time at this welcoming and friendly pre-school. Staff provide them with an exceptional range of interesting toys and resources. Children are eager to play and highly motivated to learn. They make excellent progress from their starting points because the caring staff team know children very well. Staff clearly identify children's current stage of development and provide them with targeted play activities to enhance and support their future learning. Staffs outstanding practice and the carefully organised learning environment support children to be highly confident and achieve excellent levels of independence for their age. For example, pre-school children enthusiastically help staff to prepare sandwiches for lunch. They use knives safely and confidently slice fruit, spread butter and cut bread. This helps children to develop hand-to-eye coordination and strength in their hands and arms in readiness for early writing. Children display excellent hygiene practice. They know what is expected from them and quickly tell staff they will wash their hands before they start to prepare food.

Staff fully support children's physical development. Children move their bodies in different ways as they enthusiastically engage in a dance activity with staff. Children excitedly play outside in the fresh air. They are eager to chase their friends and follow staffs instructions as they play team games, such as follow the leader. Young children climb and balance on small logs. This helps them to develop their core strength. Young children enthusiastically pick up stones to search for bugs. Staff sit alongside to support their play. They skilfully introduce mathematical language, such as big, small, long and short as they discuss the size and length of the worms. Staff ask questions which promotes children's thinking skills. For example, they ask children to think about where worms live.

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

- The dedicated manager is also the provider of this exceptional pre-school. She works alongside her well retained staff team on a daily basis. Staff morale is extremely high. They report high levels of support for their well-being. The manager holds frequent meetings with all staff to discuss their professional development and best practice. Staff state the manager is wonderful and she is always there for them, both in a professional capacity and in their personal life.
- Staff provide a thoughtful and highly ambitious curriculum. They make regular and precise assessments of what children know and can, do to identify what they need to learn next. Children receive prompt, targeted early help because staff work well with other professionals. This includes their own contracted speech and language therapist, who attends the pre-school weekly, to support staff to close any gaps in children's communication and language development.

- Staff have high expectations for children's behaviour. They are excellent role models. Staff speak in a respectful and gentle manner. Children display the same gentle and respectful nature. They play cooperatively with their friends. Children share, take turns and learn to resolve their own minor conflicts. They display high levels of confidence in different social situations. Children interact positively with visitors and invite them to join their play.
- Staff place a strong focus on supporting children to develop excellent communication and language skills and a love of books. Children sit quietly in the cosy book area to explore the wide range of interesting and age-appropriate books. Staff use different tones, volume and expressions as they enthusiastically read stories to them. Staff engage children in deep and meaningful conversations. For example, at story time they revisit the meaning of words, such as selfish and lazy. Children are eager to join in with the discussion because they know the meaning of these words. Children confidently tell staff 'the farmer is selfish and lazy because he is not helping and that is not kind'.
- Young children enjoy lots of opportunities to sing songs and rhymes. Staff are quick to introduce songs into their play. For example, as young children search for bugs, staff start to sing about the wiggly worm and encourage them to join in. Young children develop the muscles in their jaw and mouth as they learn to blow bubbles from a wand.
- The manager and staff team have excellent relationships with parents. They share lots of information about children's progress. For example, through daily discussions, termly meetings and the pre-school's closed social media page. Parents are extremely happy with the care and education children receive at the pre-school. They state their children are very happy and settle really well. Parents comment on the high levels of progress children make and how the kind and nurturing staff know their children so well.
- Partnerships with the adjoining school are outstanding. The manager meets regularly with the head teacher to discuss local safeguarding issues. This helps them both to be fully aware of any emerging concerns. Staff invite the reception teacher into the pre-school to get to know children in their own surroundings. They take children to visit the reception class to get to know the teacher and become familiar with the layout of the class. During the summer term, the manager spends time with the reception teacher to discuss children's individual personalities as well as their development. This shared information supports children to have a smooth transition to school when the time comes.
- The manager and staff are highly reflective. They know what they do well and what they would like to develop. For example, to expand the provision for two-year olds to further meet the needs of their community.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

Setting details

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| Unique reference number | EY356893 |
| Local authority | Herefordshire |
| Inspection number | 10317451 |
| 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 | 2 to 10 |
| Total number of places | 35 |
| Number of children on roll | 48 |
| Name of registered person | Holmer Pre-School Ltd |
| Registered person unique reference number | RP527064 |
| Telephone number | 07796204133 |
| Date of previous inspection | 14 May 2018 |

Information about this early years setting

Holmer Pre-School operates from Holmer C of E Academy in Hereford. It registered in 2007. The pre-school employs seven members of childcare staff, all hold appropriate early years qualifications. This includes three who hold an early years foundation degree and one early childhood graduate. The pre-school operates Monday to Friday from 8am until 5.30pm term-time only. They offer a holiday club based on demand. The pre-school provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector
Tina Smith

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 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 spoke with the inspector during the inspection.
- The inspector talked to staff at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their views.
- 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 spoke to a number of parents during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The manager showed the inspector documentation to demonstrate the suitability of staff.

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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