

# Inspection of Applecroft Pre-School

Applecroft Road, Luton LU2 8BB

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Inspection date: 10 July 2024

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
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The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
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Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
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Personal development	<b>Good</b>
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Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
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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 confident and keen to learn at this small and welcoming pre-school. Staff know the children well and provide opportunities for learning that gain their attention. Children concentrate to fill rows of boards with pegs, and older children eagerly attempt to trace their name. Outside, children dig and make marks in the mud. These activities help to develop their small finger muscles. Children are gaining good larger physical skills. Staff provide children with access to resources that they might not have outside pre-school, such as tricycles and scooters. Children ride them in the garden, developing control. Inside, staff lead a 'freeze dance'. They model hopping, jumping and staying still. Children copy the actions and hold a still pose in creative ways when the music stops. This helps to develop their awareness of their bodies and space.

Children behave well. They follow instructions and are kind to their friends. Children use their imagination, and staff help them to express their creativity. Younger children explore the texture and smell of water and citrus fruits. Older children use small-world figures to create stories and role play. Staff join in play and use these moments to skilfully build on what children already know and can do. When making ice cream, children tell staff they have the 'yellow flavour'. Staff suggest names of different flavours using props to help children understand the concept and extend their vocabulary.

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

- The small team works closely to support children and their families. The management committee understands its responsibilities to operate the pre-school and support the staff's well-being and development. Staff have opportunities to achieve formal early years qualifications to develop their skills. However, the team does not target further professional development sharply enough to promote teaching skills even further.
- Children know the routines well and demonstrate their sense of security in the pre-school. They sit on the mat ready for group times and know to line up before going out in the garden. However, at times, staff are not always ready for the children to move on to the next part of their day. This means that children spend time waiting. They become restless and do not learn meaningful skills during these waiting periods.
- Staff support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities exceptionally well. They liaise with other professionals and implement the guidance they give. Staff involve parents fully in the overall plan for their children. All staff value children's contributions and recognise the good progress that these children make from their starting points. Leaders ensure that children receive their full entitlement to education. Additional funding for children is spent

well to help them make good progress in their learning.

- Staff support children to develop their communication and language skills in playful ways. They encourage children to sing familiar rhymes and songs. Children request books to be read and ask staff to read books to them. Staff read with expression and bring children's attention to the pictures. They ask older children questions and wait to listen to the answers.
- The key-person approach works effectively. Staff make good use of their observations and assessments of children's development. They identify children's next steps in learning to build on what children already know and can do. Staff liaise with specialists and others in their community, including schools, to help children be ready and supported when they go to school.
- Partnerships with parents are strong. Parents value the good communication and information they receive about their children. They work together to support children. For example, when children are diagnosed with dietary needs, staff adhere to dietary guidance. Staff help parents to support their children's learning at home and keep them up to date with their progress.
- Children are becoming independent. For example, they take their coats off their hooks and put them on to go outside. Staff praise children as they have a go before asking staff for help, demonstrating that they have a 'can-do' attitude. This helps them to develop a love of learning and be ready for the next stage of their education.

## 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:**

- target staff development more sharply to help build on their knowledge and teaching skills
- help staff to prepare the transition times of the day so that children's learning is maximised.

## Setting details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	EY477000
<b>Local authority</b>	Luton
<b>Inspection number</b>	10357260
<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>	Sessional day care
<b>Age range of children at time of inspection</b>	2 to 4
<b>Total number of places</b>	24
<b>Number of children on roll</b>	34
<b>Name of registered person</b>	Applecroft Pre-School Committee
<b>Registered person unique reference number</b>	RP533622
<b>Telephone number</b>	07985765665
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	25 March 2019

## Information about this early years setting

Applecroft Pre-School opened in 1971 and re-registered in 2014. It is situated in Luton. The pre-school employs six members of childcare staff. Of these, three hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3. The pre-school opens from Monday to Friday during term time only. Sessions are from 9.15am until 3.15pm. The pre-school receives funding to provide free early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

## Information about this inspection

**Inspector**  
Elke Rockey

## 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 provision.
- The manager joined the inspector on a learning walk and talked to the inspector about the curriculum and what they want the children to learn.
- The inspector talked to staff at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The provider and the inspector carried out a joint observation of a spontaneous activity.
- 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 spoke to several parents during the inspection and considered their views.
- The inspector looked at relevant documentation and reviewed evidence of the suitability of staff working in the pre-school.
- Children talked with the inspector 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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