

Inspection of Mortimer Hall

Mortimer Hall, Oxford Road, Oxford OX3 0PH

Inspection date: 12 July 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

Staff warmly greet parents and children as they enter the pre-school. The strong key-person system and well-thought-out curriculum supports children's emotional well-being. Children seek comfort and cuddles from their key person when needed, showing they feel safe and secure. Older children, in particular, display confidence by actively involving visitors in their play and cheerfully shouting 'hello' as people enter the room. This amazing confidence will benefit them in their future learning.

Staff consistently promote and support children's communication and language skills. For instance, they stay close as children happily chat back and forth while building with bricks, expertly interweaving new words such as 'big' and 'wobbly'. Children listen intently and enjoy repeating the new words they learn. They have a good vocabulary and animatedly use it to share their ideas with others.

This inclusive and stimulating pre-school ensures all children can fully participate in what is on offer. For example, children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive full attention and highly tailored support. Their key persons skilfully reflect on the children's needs and interests daily and children make good progress.

Staff have high expectations of children's behaviour. For example, staff ask children to line up and wait patiently as they move to the hall. This helps children to learn what is expected of them. Children's behaviour is good and the atmosphere is calm.

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

- Staff deliver a curriculum centred on building children's independence and confidence. They consistently encourage children to try new things and persevere. For example, staff motivate children to persist as they fill spray bottles. This approach fosters children's confidence and helps them to understand they can do things for themselves.
- Staff recognise the importance of providing lots of opportunities for children to engage in physical play. They plan engaging activities to help children learn new skills. For instance, children enjoy learning to use skipping ropes, using their leg muscles to jump off the ground with both feet. Their physical abilities are well practised. Children confidently climb large play equipment with little help.
- Staff are exemplary role models for behaviour and gently remind children of expectations. Children readily follow instructions and exhibit good behaviour. For instance, staff remind children to 'keep their feet on the floor' when they go to climb on furniture and children quickly respond. This helps children learn what is expected and enhances their listening skills.

- Staff are passionate about supporting children's emotional well-being. They plan appropriate activities to teach children about feelings. For example, staff enthusiastically portray a 'surprised' expression while repeating the word, helping younger children recognise it. Older children confidently label emotions, understanding that 'losing a toy can make you sad'. Children are developing an understanding of feelings that will help them in their personal development.
- Leaders are dedicated to supporting staff's well-being. Staff report enjoying their time at the pre-school. They value the kind and caring support they receive. Although leaders monitor the curriculum and discuss this with staff overall, they do not provide staff with specifically targeted professional development to help them fully understand and improve on practice over time. This leads to inconsistencies in some staff understanding the curriculum intent for some children's learning.
- Leaders and staff have positive partnerships with parents. Parents value the friendly staff and the homely environment provided. However, while the pre-school shares information through an online journal for parents to access, they do not consistently communicate children's next steps in learning. This limits parents' ability to support their child in making progress towards their development goals.
- Children with SEND are afforded the utmost care and learning, and this is a real strength of this pre-school. Staff effectively employ various strategies, such as remaining nearby and assisting children who previously felt unsettled during sessions. These children now navigate the environment confidently and happily. Staff recognise that achievements may be small but, as with all children who attend, these are celebrated with excitement.

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:

- provide staff with precisely focused professional development to support the continual extension of their knowledge and understanding of next steps in learning
- strengthen communication with parents to help them to know their children's next steps in development, to enable consistency and continuity in their learning.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY496790
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	10351371
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	2 to 5
Total number of places	26
Number of children on roll	25
Name of registered person	Mortimer Hall Pre-School CIO
Registered person unique reference number	RP535090
Telephone number	01865 604208
Date of previous inspection	30 October 2018

Information about this early years setting

Mortimer Hall registered in 2015. It operates from the local village hall in Old Marston, close to the centre of Oxford. The pre-school is open from 9am to 3pm, Monday to Friday, term time only. There are eight staff working directly with the children. Of these, seven hold appropriate early years qualifications. The pre-school is in receipt of funding for the provision of free early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Mandy Cooper

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the pre-school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the pre-school and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the provider.
- The deputy 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 their friends and 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 special educational needs coordinator spoke to the inspector about how they support children with SEND.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation of an activity with the deputy manager.
- Parents and carers shared their views of the setting with the inspector.

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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