Inspection of Mount Carmel Kindergarten

100a Sandpit Lane, St Albans AL4 0BX

Inspection date:	9 September 2024

Overall effectiveness	**Outstanding**
The quality of education	**Outstanding**
Behaviour and attitudes	**Outstanding**
Personal development	**Outstanding**
Leadership and management	**Outstanding**
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is outstanding

Staff greet children and families warmly on arrival, providing reassurance and support to help new children settle in comfortably to this outstanding setting. Staff build strong relationships with their key children, fostering a sense of security and belonging from the start of the day. Children quickly become engaged in the highly effective and ambitious curriculum. Their imaginative world is captured as they race cars up and down tracks they have made, and skilfully use tools to manipulate dough to make cakes for their friends. Staff take every opportunity to introduce new words to children, such as 'crunchy' and 'squidgy', as they describe foods they eat for lunch, fully supporting children to develop complex language.

Staff promote a democratic and child-led learning environment where children have a strong voice. Children engage in collective decision-making processes during assemblies. Staff encourage children to express their preferences as they use tokens to vote for the activity they would like to do. Children are extremely well behaved. They learn to show respect for their environment as staff encourage them to tidy away toys when they have finished. Staff provide an abundance of positive feedback and praise when they complete these tasks, fully supporting children's positive behaviour and building their already-high self-esteem.

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

- Staff are exceptionally skilled at engaging with children to support their learning and development. Children demonstrate consistently high levels of concentration as they access a range of rich learning experiences that help to build on knowledge they need for future learning. For example, children explore a globe and discover where their families come from, finding countries such as Singapore and the Czech Republic. They talk about the languages they speak in these countries and find pictures of the flags.
- The leadership team is passionate about its role and works collaboratively to ensure that the setting is always operating to its best potential. Staff are extremely well supported, and morale is high. The leadership team empowers staff by identifying areas for development and offers tailored support to help raise practice to the highest standard. There is a strong focus on building a dynamic and motivated team that provides exceptional care for children in the setting.
- Staff go above and beyond to ensure that children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported. Staff ensure that the environment and children's experiences are adapted so that they feel included and have the same learning opportunities as other children. For example, adapted pushchairs are provided, enabling children to be involved in sports days. Swings are adapted in the outside area to enable all children to access them. This fully

supports children to make the very best progress from their starting points.

- The setting excels in supporting children's emotional well-being, with dedicated spaces such as cosy corners and special chairs in each room to help children regulate their emotions. Staff act as exceptionally good role models with a focus on emotional regulation and positive behaviour, a core strength in staff that contributes to a calm and nurturing atmosphere, allowing children to be happy, confident learners.
- Parents provide overwhelmingly positive feedback about the setting and consistently report that their children have made significant progress since starting at the setting. Parents highlighted the setting's excellent communication, including daily updates, shared photos and termly development updates outlining their children's next steps in learning, helping parents to stay well informed and engaged in their child's learning journey.
- Transitions throughout the day are smooth and seamless, supporting children as they move around the setting. Staff manage changes calmly and effectively, providing additional support when needed. This ensures that children feel secure and that their emotional needs are consistently met, fully supporting their well-being.
- Staff provide opportunities for families to share information about their cultural identity and to come in to talk about special celebrations. Children learn about different traditions, clothing, foods and practices, helping them to build an appreciation and respect for cultural differences. Children are supported to engage in meaningful conversations during these sessions by asking questions and sharing their thoughts. This helps to develop their already well-developed language and communication skills, as they learn to articulate questions and listen attentively.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY500558
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10354936
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	2 to 4
Total number of places	62
Number of children on roll	100
Name of registered person	Mount Carmel Kindergarten Ltd
Registered person unique reference number	RP535421
Telephone number	01727 838480
Date of previous inspection	12 November 2018

Information about this early years setting

Mount Carmel Kindergarten registered in 2016 and is located in St Albans. It employs 15 members of childcare staff. Of these, nine hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 or above. The owner and one of the managers hold early years professional status and the other manager holds early years teacher status. The kindergarten opens Monday to Friday from 8am to 5pm, during term time only. An optional holiday club is also offered during the school holidays, from 9am to 5pm. The kindergarten receives funding to provide free early education for three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector
Emily Woodhead

Inspection activities

- The principal joined the inspector on a learning walk. She talked to the inspector about the curriculum.
- The inspector observed the quality of education being provided, indoors and outdoors. She discussed children's progress with staff.
- The principal and inspector carried out a joint observation.
- The inspector looked at relevant documentation. This included evidence of staff suitability, staff records and safeguarding documents.
- The inspector spoke to parents during the inspection and took account of the written feedback provided.

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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