

Inspection of United Reformed Church Pre-School and Nursery

Vaughan Road, Harpenden, Hertfordshire AL5 4ED

Inspection date: 1 February 2022

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 flourish in this stimulating learning environment. They are extremely excited to arrive and separate from carers with ease. The dedicated manager and her nurturing, enthusiastic team are at the door to welcome them. Children thoroughly enjoy dressing up as story characters for book week. They delight in showing off their outfits to staff, who enthusiastically encourage them to find the corresponding book.

Children experience exceptional learning opportunities in the nursery. The manager and her team plan an extremely interesting and challenging curriculum based upon children's interests. All activities are very carefully planned and adapted with clear intent for individual children's learning. For example, sand is used exceptionally well to support children's sensory development and mark-making skills. Furthermore, staff skilfully incorporate children's mathematical development by encouraging them to sort and count insects buried in the sand.

Children display exceptionally high levels of confidence. Young children are excited to sing rhymes and demonstrate sign language extremely well in front of their friends. Pre-school children talk very confidently to their friends, staff and visitors about family customs and celebrations. Children learn about the Chinese New Year. They excitedly tell everyone which animal corresponds to the year they were born in. Children then proceed to actively encourage staff and visitors to discover their lunar zodiac animal.

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

- Children make excellent progress in the nursery. Staff plan and monitor children's learning exceptionally well. They deliver a broad ranging curriculum which challenges all children. Staff revisit activities regularly. This allows them to accurately measure the impact of their teaching on children's development.
- Children of all ages display exceptionally high levels of curiosity in their play. Staff consistently encourage children to explore their ideas further. Children learn about dinosaurs. They eagerly investigate their various features, size and the footprints they leave. Staff immediately build on the children's enjoyment, encouraging them to examine and create their own fossils.
- The manager and staff are well qualified and highly knowledgeable about how children learn. They understand their role in supporting children's development in preparation for school extremely well. The manager and staff have introduced 'finger gym' activities and frequent dough activities. This encourages children to develop hand and arm strength in preparation for their emerging writing skills.
- During the COVID-19 lockdown, the manager and staff maintained close contact with families. They provided excellent ideas on how to continue children's

learning at home. Staff took part in regular online story sessions for children to enjoy at home. The manager also provided exceptional practical and emotional support for parents during this difficult period.

- Children who speak English as an additional language are exceptionally well supported in the nursery. Staff work closely with parents to identify key words and phrases when children start. Routines are also shared with families from the start. Staff produce visual schedules which are also translated into children's home languages. This supports children to settle quickly in the nursery.
- Relationships between staff and families are outstanding. All parents spoken to were incredibly complimentary about the nursery and staff. They deeply value the kindness and support shown to children and families. Several parents have older children who previously attended the nursery. They recognise the high-quality learning opportunities staff provide. These parents comment on how this has enabled their children to thrive in school.
- Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are extremely well supported in the nursery. The dedicated setting coordinator swiftly identifies when children may require additional support. She works closely with other professionals, families and staff. This enables her to establish activities and routines which support children's needs both at home and in the nursery extremely well.
- The manager is very committed to developing staff practice. She conducts regular high-quality appraisals and staff supervisions. Staff participate in a wide range of training opportunities to further broaden their exciting very good knowledge and skills. The well-established team of staff praise the manager for her dedication to the children and for developing the nursery. They also value the emphasis she placed on staff well-being, particularly during the pandemic.
- Staff place an exceptionally sharp focus on developing children's communication and language skills. They create an environment rich in new and descriptive vocabulary. Children enjoy numerous opportunities to explore songs and stories. They have extensive knowledge of Makaton, which they demonstrate throughout the day, for example when selecting fruit at snack time.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The manager and staff demonstrate an exceptionally strong understanding of their role in keeping children safe. They are extensively aware of the signs and symptoms which could indicate that a child is at risk of harm, including the process to follow when they have concerns about a child. The manager and staff fully understand the need to report these concerns to the correct authority in a timely manner. They complete daily risk assessments of all areas of the setting to ensure children's safety and well-being remain paramount at all times. The manager and committee have extremely robust recruitment and induction processes in place to ensure staff are suitable to work with children and fully understand their roles.

Setting details

Unique reference number	123612
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10127311
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Day care type	Sessional day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	2 to 4
Total number of places	45
Number of children on roll	51
Name of registered person	United Reformed Church Pre-School Committee
Registered person unique reference number	RP523977
Telephone number	07480 369531
Date of previous inspection	26 February 2014

Information about this early years setting

United Reformed Church Pre-School and Nursery registered in 1973. It operates within the United Reformed Church Hall in Harpenden, Hertfordshire. The setting is open Monday to Thursday from 9am to 3pm, during term time only. It employs 10 members of childcare staff. Of these, six hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 2 and above, including two with qualified teacher status.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Antonia Campbell

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 inspector observed the quality of education to assess the impact on children's learning.
- The inspector considered the views of parents by speaking to them during the inspection.
- The inspector and the manager completed a joint observation of an activity to assess the quality of teaching.
- The inspector looked at relevant documents, including evidence of the suitability of all staff and committee members.
- The inspector and the manager discussed how the early years setting is organised.
- The inspector held discussions with staff about the monitoring of learning and development in the setting and tracked the progress of children.

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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