

Inspection of Fountain Montessori Nursery And Pre-School - St Albans

77 Holywell Hill, St. Albans, Hertfordshire AL1 1HF

Inspection date: 17 February 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not applicable

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children of all ages are extremely happy, safe and secure in this warm and welcoming nursery. They cheerfully enter the nursery and settle quickly, eager for their day to begin. Children are developing firm attachments with staff, who are patient, kind and caring in their approach.

Children are very well behaved. They know the routines and what is expected of them. Children are kind and considerate to others. Staff have very high expectations for their behaviour. Children are praised for their efforts, which gives them a sense of achievement and builds their self-esteem.

Children's independence, personal care and social skills are developed from a young age. They confidently hang up their coats and bags when they arrive, and capably use the self-registration system in the pre-school room. Young children learn their handwashing routines. They choose their drink of milk or water and are supported to use cutlery and serve themselves lunch. Older children enjoy a sociable mealtime. There is plenty of chatter with their friends and staff as they talk about a variety of topics.

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

- Managers and staff provide and develop a broad and balanced curriculum that follows children's interests and considers their next steps in learning. A varied range of experiences build on what children know and can do, developing skills for their move to school. Children become motivated learners as they enjoy their self-chosen activities. Staff skilfully encourage them as they play, supporting children's concentration and full involvement.
- Children have wonderful opportunities to learn about other cultures and countries. Older children take part in projects and research topics. For example, they recently completed a detailed project about a woman in Ghana who provided support for other women to set up small businesses. Through their research, children found out how the woman supported others and what had been achieved.
- Children learn about healthy eating and which foods provide their bodies with carbohydrates and protein. For example, at lunchtime, staff ask older children which foods relate to each group and why these are good for them. Children knowledgeably talk about foods that give them strength and energy, and how these help them to be active.
- Children learn to use mathematical language as they enjoy their activities. They recognise and describe the different shapes and sizes of objects they enthusiastically hunt for and find hidden in the shredded paper.
- Children of all ages demonstrate a love of literacy. Staff read to children with

enthusiasm and ask questions about what might happen next. A library book system is in place to enable children to take a book home to share with their family. This further supports children's early literacy skills.

- Staff actively promote children's communication and language skills. They provide a running commentary as children play, which helps to give meaning to what they are doing. Furthermore, staff use descriptive language and repetition to reinforce children's understanding. For example, during a mark-making activity, children identify the different marks they make with their cars, such as zig-zags, 'wiggly' lines and circles. They talk about the straight and curvy lines made as they change the route of their vehicle.
- Staff build strong relationships with parents and other professionals. Parents speak very highly about the service and communication they receive from the nursery staff. They appreciate the detailed information shared with them about their child's learning and development, including what they are working on next. Parents comment that they are extremely pleased with the progress their child makes as a result of attending the nursery.
- Staff complete a comprehensive induction and probationary period when they join the nursery. They are able to access online training and are encouraged to reflect on their practice. Although there is a system for supervision of staff in place, some staff are not clear exactly what this is and do not know when this occurs. However, staff comment that managers are very approachable and they would not hesitate to speak to them about any issues they may have.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The management and staff team demonstrate a very secure understanding of the procedures to follow in order to keep children safe from harm. They confidently describe the possible signs and symptoms that may indicate a child is at risk of abuse or neglect. Staff regularly update and refresh their knowledge and understanding about safeguarding, including wider issues, such as extreme beliefs. They are clear about the action to take if they have a concern about a child's welfare.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

To further improve the quality of the early years provision, the provider should:

- review arrangements in place for the supervision of staff, so that all staff clearly understand how and when this occurs.

Setting details

Unique reference number	2546935
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10225426
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	0 to 8
Total number of places	57
Number of children on roll	60
Name of registered person	Fountain Montessori Pre-School Limited
Registered person unique reference number	RP906020
Telephone number	01727 855935
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

Fountain Montessori Nursery And Pre-School - St Albans registered in 2019 and is situated in St Albans, Hertfordshire. It operates from 7.30am to 6.30pm Monday to Friday throughout the year. The nursery employs 18 members of childcare staff. Of these, 15 hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 2 or above. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Lorraine Sunter

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 the children to learn.
- 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 talked to staff at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation with the manager, and together they discussed the effectiveness of teaching.
- The inspector held a meeting with the director and the manager. This included a review of relevant documentation, such as evidence of the suitability of staff working in the nursery.
- The inspector spoke to several parents and took account of their views.

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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