

Inspection of Mount Carmel Sandpit House

60a Sandpit Lane, St Albans, Herts AL1 4BW

Inspection date: 11 October 2021

Overall effectiveness	Good
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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 are happy and excited when they arrive at the kindergarten. Staff greet families warmly and chat to them enthusiastically about their weekend. Children are secure in the routines at the setting and separate from carers with ease. They are eager to join their friends and teachers in their classrooms. Staff plan interesting learning opportunities, which they skilfully adapt to meet the needs of all children in the kindergarten.

Children are learning the importance of being polite and helpful to others. Staff use every opportunity to support their understanding. At snack time, children are encouraged to pass bowls of fruit and crackers to their friends. They take turns in pouring their drinks. Staff are excellent role models. They demonstrate consistently good manners and respect, when interacting with children and other adults.

Children show great confidence in their play. Staff encourage this by offering exciting and challenging learning opportunities. They allow children to take age-appropriate risks and reward their efforts and achievements with lots of praise. When exploring the climbing frame, young children delight at being able to navigate the ropes and ladders independently.

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

- Staff have good knowledge of children's different abilities. At snack time, younger children collect their place mats when the initial sound in their name is called out. Staff encourage older children to count the number of letters in their name. Children then calculate if their name has more or fewer letters than that of their friends.
- Parents and carers speak highly of managers and staff. They value the nurturing approach they have with children. Parents also talk about the guidance and support staff offer when they have concerns over aspects of their children's development.
- Children have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles. They talk about how they drink milk to make their bones and teeth strong and need to rest to be able to learn. Staff plan lots of physical activities in the indoor gymnasium and the large garden. Children also enjoy going on nature trails and exploring local woods.
- Managers work hard to establish effective means of communication with families. They use electronic journals to share information about children's daily activities and their progress. Parents have regular face-to-face meetings with their child's leader. This is an opportunity to share children's achievements and establish more detailed learning plans for parents to support at home.
- Managers build strong relationships with families from the start. They are invited

to visit the kindergarten for an induction session prior to children starting. Staff use this as an opportunity to gather information about children's early experiences. This allows them to provide learning opportunities based around children's interests and needs.

- Children demonstrate a positive attitude to learning through high levels of concentration during activities. While in the garden, children build a large wooden track to run their cars along. They cooperate well with one another, passing blocks and deciding carefully where to put tunnels and bridges.
- Children are learning to be independent. They pour their own drinks and clear away their plates and cups, after meals and snacks. Staff encourage children to put on their own coats and shoes. This prepares them for the routines of school.
- Managers and staff make good use of group time. They use age-appropriate games to support children's understanding of being kind and helping one another. However, when children struggle demonstrating such behaviours, staff are not always consistent in their response. This means conflicts are not always resolved swiftly or effectively.
- Staff support children's learning well in sessions of free play. They encourage children's curiosity by asking age-appropriate questions and allowing plenty of time for children to respond. However, staff do not consistently engage children in high-quality interactions during planned activities.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Managers and staff have a robust understanding of the signs and symptoms that may indicate that a child is at risk of harm. They know the importance of reporting concerns to the correct authority in a timely manner. Managers and staff complete regular safeguarding training to ensure their knowledge remains up to date with changing legislation. Staff conduct regular risk assessments of all areas of their practice to keep children safe in their care. They supervise children well, both in the setting and when out on walks.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- implement more robust and consistent methods of supporting children to understand and manage their behaviour
- support staff in understanding their role in delivering consistently high levels of teaching in planned activities.

Setting details

Unique reference number	2530647
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10208448
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	52
Number of children on roll	59
Name of registered person	Mount Carmel Kindergarten Ltd
Registered person unique reference number	RP535421
Telephone number	01727 838480
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

Mount Carmel Sandpit House registered in 2018. It employs 13 members of childcare staff. Of these, seven hold appropriate early years qualifications. The kindergarten opens from 8am to 5pm from Monday to Friday. The kindergarten provides funded early years education for three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Antonia Campbell

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the provider received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the setting and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the setting.
- The inspector observed the quality of education to assess the impact on children's learning.
- The inspector spoke to children and staff at appropriate times during the inspection.
- The inspector spoke to several parents and took account of their views.
- The inspector and manager completed a joint observation of an activity to assess the quality of education.
- The inspector checked documents relating to staff suitability and qualifications, including safeguarding and first aid.
- The inspector held discussions with the manager and staff about the monitoring of learning and development in the setting. She tracked the progress of several 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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