

Inspection of Rookies Day Nursery

Stevenage Football Academy, Shephallbury Sports Centre, Broadhall Way,
Stevenage, Hertfordshire SG2 8RH

Inspection date: 30 April 2025

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

Children are happy in this child-focused and nurturing nursery. Staff are attentive to children's emotional needs. They provide them with comforting cuddles as they begin to feel tired. Children are confident and inquisitive. They explore the varied range of appealing activities that reflect their interests with enthusiasm. Staff know children well and support their development. All children make good progress.

Staff support children to be independent. Babies are encouraged to feed themselves while younger children manage risk as they help to prepare their own healthy snack. They show high levels of perseverance and keep on trying to cut strips of pineapple in response to staff praise. Older children manage their own hygiene and self-care. Staff prioritise children's communication and language skills. They use a carefully selected core book over several weeks to encourage children to remember and join in words and repeated refrains through repetition. Children enjoy joining in with familiar songs and rhymes and staff introduce them to new words, such as seahorse. Younger children discover how pressing and removing buttons from dough creates interesting patterns and textures. Older children solve simple mathematical problems, such as subtraction and develop strong critical thinking skills. They show enthusiasm for writing, with some confidently able to write their own name independently.

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

- Children's behaviour is good and appropriate to their stage of development. They are beginning to build friendly relationships and understand about expectations. Older children know to wait patiently for their turn to clear away their dinner trays and staff sensitively support babies and younger children to share resources and take turns. Inviting cosy areas and regulation stations in every room create nurturing spaces that support children in recognising, understanding and managing their own emotions.
- Children with special educational needs/and or disabilities are well supported. Staff form strong partnerships with other professionals to focus on closing identified gaps in children's learning. Any additional funding the nursery receives is used meticulously to support children's individual needs.
- Staff effectively monitor children's progress and identify what children need to learn next. They plan a curriculum that introduces children to new experiences and knowledge, such as new growth through planned activities. Overall, these planned activities support children to build on what they know through a sequenced approach. For example, older children gain a secure understanding that seeds grow in to plants over time. Staff's skilful use of questions and sharing of stories linked to growth, such as Jack and the Beanstalk helps to deepen children's understanding and motivates children to recall knowledge.

However, some planned activities for younger children are less effective. For instance, they plant runner bean seeds but have no prior knowledge of what seeds or runner beans are, this limits their ability to make meaningful connections.

- Partnerships with parents and other settings children attend is good. Staff keep parents informed of their child's development through an online platform, verbal discussions and the offer to attend parent evenings. Parents are warmly welcomed to events throughout the year and have high regard for staff, they describe them as 'bubbly' and 'friendly'.
- Children lead healthy lifestyles. They benefit from organised enrichment activities from visiting professionals that increase their physical abilities through dance, yoga and team games. Children thoroughly enjoy time in the inviting outdoor areas. However, the organisation of some transitions throughout the day mean that children wait for extended periods of time because staff do not fully tailor the routines to children's needs. For example, babies sit waiting too long for their lunch to be served. Therefore, children are not always engaged in meaningful learning.
- Leaders work with staff to support their ongoing professional development. They observe staff interactions and invest time modelling high-quality teaching across all rooms. However, identified areas for development in practice are not always prioritised. This results in some staff's teaching being variable. For instance, they do not consistently adapt their teaching to precisely match children's individual learning when all children gather as a whole group. Therefore, children's learning is not always promoted to the highest level. Staff feel valued. Their achievements are recognised and celebrated by leaders. This has a positive impact on staff well-being.

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:

- concentrate more sharply on implementing a sequenced approach to children's learning
- refine the organisation of routines during the day to minimise waiting time for children
- strengthen and embed the support for staff to adapt their teaching to precisely match the individual learning needs of children.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY563402
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10400175
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	0 to 4
Total number of places	94
Number of children on roll	140
Name of registered person	Lily's Day Nursery Limited
Registered person unique reference number	RP563401
Telephone number	01438 842233
Date of previous inspection	4 July 2019

Information about this early years setting

Rookies Day Nursery registered in 2018. The nursery is open from 7.30am until 6pm for 51 weeks of the year. There are 20 staff members who work directly with the children; of these, 18 hold relevant childcare qualifications at level 2 or above. The nursery provides government funded early years education for all eligible children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Lorraine Pike

Inspection activities

- The inspector and manager completed a learning walk across all the areas of the nursery to understand how the curriculum is organised.
- A joint observation of an activity was carried out by the inspector and the manager.
- The inspector observed the quality of teaching during activities indoors and outdoors. She assessed the impact this has on children's learning.
- The inspector held a discussion with the provider on the telephone. She also held a number of discussions with staff and children at appropriate times during the inspection.
- The inspector held a meeting with the manager and deputy manager. She looked at relevant documentation, such as evidence of the suitability of staff working in the nursery.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents spoken to on the day and their written feedback.

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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