

Inspection of Merry-Go-Round @ Riverside

Riverside Primary School, Belmont Avenue, Hereford HR2 7JF

Inspection date: 22 August 2025

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	Outstanding

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

The nurturing staff team build strong relationships with children and their families. Effective settling-in sessions help children's move from home to the nursery. Parents and children are invited to attend stay-and-play sessions, which staff tailor to meet their individual needs. Staff seek a range of information from parents about children's interests and development to help plan personalised learning experiences from the outset. Children arrive happy, and they separate from their parents or carers with ease. They are eager to play and are motivated to learn.

All children make good progress from their starting points. Staff plan a broad range of engaging play experiences around children's interests to support their learning. They support children's early literacy and communication skills well. Staff read to children throughout the day and encourage them to join in with action songs and rhymes. This helps children to build vocabulary and develop good listening skills. Staff provide pre-school children with daily activities to help them link letters and sounds, laying secure foundations for early reading. They build strong partnerships with parents and encourage them to borrow books from the lending library to support a love of reading at home. Children behave well because staff are positive role models. They speak to children with respect, which children model in their own interactions. Children are confident to express their needs and are learning to share, take turns and use good manners. Babies are very happy and content. Staff are highly responsive to their needs, offering lots of cuddles. They quickly recognise when the youngest children are becoming tired and swiftly settle them to sleep.

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

- Leaders are dedicated to their roles, and they strive to deliver high-quality care and education for all children. Their child-centred approach ensures that children's well-being, development and learning are their priority.
- Leaders have a secure understanding of what the nursery does well and accurately identifies areas for improvement. They recognise that recent changes to the staff team mean the quality of teaching across the nursery is good but no longer outstanding. Although leaders meet regularly with staff to discuss good practice, these opportunities are not yet consistently used to precisely identify gaps in staff's knowledge or skills. This means that professional development is not always sharply focused on individual training needs to enhance the quality of teaching and support children to achieve even better outcomes.
- Staff have a generally secure understanding of what they want children to learn from planned play activities, for example for older children to develop hand strength in preparation for early writing and young children to use single words and associative sounds to build early communication skills. However, staff do not

consistently focus their interactions on the intended learning intention. They sometimes introduce too many additional concepts into play activities, which distracts from the purpose of the activity and means staff miss opportunities to embed the intent for children's learning.

- The key-person system is effective. Children form secure relationships with familiar adults who understand their individual needs. Strong partnerships with parents ensure a consistent approach to children's care and learning. Key persons regularly share information with them about children's achievements and work closely with parents to support children's ongoing development, such as potty training. Parents speak highly of the caring staff team. They value their open and regular communication and comment on how well staff know their children.
- Staff support children's good health. They sensitively attend to children's personal care needs and ensure that consistent hygiene practices are followed throughout the day. Staff gently remind children to wash their hands at appropriate times. Young children sleep peacefully and comfortably because staff follow familiar routines from home, supporting continuity of care. They make regular checks on sleeping children to ensure that they are safe and well. This supports both their physical health and emotional security.
- Staff provide children with daily opportunities for fresh air and exercise. Young children develop hand-eye coordination as they fill and empty different sized containers with water. Staff sit alongside them to support their play. They introduce mathematical language such as 'full' and 'empty' to build children's understanding through meaningful interactions.
- Staff have high expectations for children's behaviour. Children sit calmly at mealtimes and respond promptly to instructions, for example, to drink to keep hydrated.

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:

- strengthen staff supervisions and reflective discussions to target professional development opportunities more precisely on staff's individual needs to raise the quality of teaching to the highest level
- support staff to consistently focus their interactions on the intended learning of activities to fully engage children and further embed their learning to help them make even better progress.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY468858
Local authority	Herefordshire
Inspection number	10407745
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 3
Total number of places	70
Number of children on roll	11
Name of registered person	Merry-Go-Round Day Nursery Limited
Registered person unique reference number	RP531989
Telephone number	01432352016
Date of previous inspection	16 January 2020

Information about this early years setting

Merry-Go-Round @ Riverside registered in 2013 and is situated in purpose-built premises on the same site as Riverside Primary School in South City, Hereford. The nursery opens Monday to Friday, all year round, except bank holidays and a week at Christmas and Easter. Sessions are from 7.30am until 4.30pm. The nursery employs 10 members of staff who work directly with children. Of whom, one holds early years professional status, one holds a qualification at level 5 and seven hold a qualification at level 3. The nursery offers funded early education for children aged nine months to four years.

Information about this inspection

Inspector
Tina Smith

Inspection activities

- 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 talked to staff at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The inspector spoke with the nominated individual and the manager about the leadership and management of the setting.
- Staff spoke to the inspector about how they support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- 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 observed the interactions between staff and children.
- The inspector carried out joint observations of group activities with the manager.
- Parents shared their views of the setting with the inspector.
- The inspector looked at relevant documentation and reviewed evidence of the suitability of staff working in the nursery.

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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