

Inspection of Merry Go Round @ Green Croft

Green Croft Children's Centre Green Croft, Hereford HR2 7NT

Inspection date: 25 September 2025

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good
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What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children arrive at the welcoming nursery happy and eager to begin their play. They are warmly greeted by the kind and caring staff, who offer gentle support and reassurance to help them separate confidently from their parents or carers.

All children make good progress in their learning and development. Staff provide a broad and engaging curriculum, inspired by children's interests and next steps in learning. The youngest children's emerging speech is supported effectively through consistent, high-quality interactions. Staff introduce single words and associative sounds during play, such as the sounds farm animals make. Throughout the day, staff encourage children to join in with songs and rhymes, helping to build vocabulary and support early communication. Staff read children stories, using expressive voices to capture their attention, promote listening skills and develop a love of books. Children behave well and respond positively to staff's calm and consistent approach. They use good manners, are kind to one another, take turns and understand staff's behavioural expectations. Pre-school children independently put on safety goggles before engaging in woodwork activities, displaying a growing awareness of how to keep themselves safe. Staff use these moments to reinforce risk awareness and encourage children to think critically about their own safety and personal responsibility.

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

- The leadership and management of the nursery is strong. Leaders demonstrate a clear commitment to providing high-quality care and education for all children. Their strong, child-centred approach ensures that children's well-being, development and learning are consistently prioritised. Leaders know the children and families well and use this knowledge to shape an inclusive and ambitious curriculum that responds to children's individual needs. They promote a positive and reflective staff culture. Continuous improvement is encouraged, and staff's professional development is supported. This ensures quality practice across the nursery and contributes to the good progress children make.
- The key-person system is effective. Children form secure, trusting relationships with familiar adults who understand their individual needs and preferences. Strong partnerships with other professionals and parents support a consistent and collaborative approach to children's care and learning. Key persons regularly share information with families about children's achievements and development and work closely with them to support key milestones, such as potty training.
- Parents speak highly of the leadership team and the caring, attentive staff. They value the strong communication and comment on how staff go above and beyond to support their children's well-being, development and learning.
- The nursery promotes healthy eating as part of its commitment to children's

health and well-being. A clear policy is shared with parents during induction. Staff encourage children to eat savoury items before sweet items to support balanced choices. Despite this, some lunch boxes contain high-sugar items, which impacts on children's behaviour and concentration in the afternoon. While staff promote healthy eating sensitively, their influence is limited by what is provided from home. Leaders are committed to working in partnership with parents to raise awareness and ensure a consistent and complementary approach to support children's healthy lifestyles.

- Staff demonstrate a generally good understanding of the curriculum intent, including its aims and learning goals. However, this understanding is not yet fully embedded across the whole team, meaning that some staff are less confident in consistently applying the curriculum principles to their day-to-day practice and planning. This occasionally leads to minor inconsistencies in children's learning experiences.
- Staff ensure children have daily opportunities for fresh air and physical activity. The youngest children develop hand-eye coordination. They carefully fill and empty different sized containers with water and sand. Older children build core strength as they dig in the mud with spades and sweep up dirt with small brooms. These activities also help to strengthen their arms and shoulders, supporting the physical skills needed for early writing.
- Young children sleep peacefully in comfortable surroundings. Staff complete safe sleep training to assist them in their role. They follow these principles to ensure that children are kept safe and well. Hygiene practice is good. Staff gently attend to children's personal care, ensuring their privacy and well-being. They are good role models and remind children to wash their hands at regular intervals throughout the day.

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 the already good partnerships with parents to promote consistency in healthy eating approaches and reduce the effects of sugar on children's behaviour and focus
- support all staff to fully understand and consistently implement curriculum intentions to ensure children benefit from high-quality learning experiences that further enhance their progress and development.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY453861
Local authority	Herefordshire
Inspection number	10399376
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	1 to 4
Total number of places	63
Number of children on roll	57
Name of registered person	Merry-Go-Round Day Nursery Limited
Registered person unique reference number	RP531989
Telephone number	01432352016
Date of previous inspection	29 November 2019

Information about this early years setting

Merry Go Round @ Green Croft registered in 2012. It operates from premises in Hereford. The nursery opens Monday to Friday for 50 weeks of the year. It is closed for bank holidays and a week at Christmas and Easter. Sessions are from 7.30am until 4.30pm. The nursery employs 15 members of childcare staff. Of these, 10 hold appropriate early years qualifications to at least level 3, including the provider who holds a level 6. The nursery offers early years education for children aged from nine months to four years.

Information about this inspection

Inspector
Tina Smith

Inspection activities

- The inspector viewed the provision and discussed the safety and suitability of the premises.
- The provider and inspector completed a learning walk together of all areas of the nursery and discussed the early years curriculum.
- The inspector talked to staff at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their views.
- 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 spoke to a number of parents during the inspection and took account of their views.
- 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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