

# Inspection of The Big Top

Meryfield School, Theobald Street, BOREHAMWOOD, Hertfordshire WD6 4PA

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Inspection date: 26 April 2022

**The quality and  
standards of early  
years provision**

**This  
inspection**

**Met**

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Previous  
inspection

Outstanding

## **What is it like to attend this early years setting?**

### **This provision meets requirements**

Children continue to thrive in this extremely nurturing out-of-school club. Staff know children's needs extremely well and help children to come in and settle quickly. Staff listen with interest and ask questions as children tell them about their day. Children enjoy their time in the club and have built strong relationships with each other. They take part in lots of activities that they enjoy and staff encourage them to follow their own choices. For example, staff arrange themselves, so that children can stay indoors if they wish to and make sure that each child has something they like to play with.

Younger children explore the toy farm and take part in lots of craft activities. All children have access to drawing and writing activities as they focus on a specific story and then retell it through a range of activities. For example, children have retold the story of 'The Tiger who Came to Tea' as a character of their choice that 'came to club'. Children express their lively imaginations, putting their own ideas onto paper. They comment that they like coming to club and that there is always something they want to do there.

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

- The manager and her staff team focus closely on children's emotional well-being and mental health. They want the children to feel safe and comfortable and to continue to flourish. They use regular mindfulness and relaxation sessions to help children to unwind when they come into the club and to manage any worries from their school day. Children show that they feel extremely secure as they share their feelings with staff and their friends. Children are praised for their achievements, which promotes their self-esteem.
- Children thoroughly enjoy playing outside, where they play running and catching games, hide and seek and football. Younger children play happily with the older ones, who help them to join in their lively games. They kick balls to each other and shout that they have 'scored a trillion goals'. Indoors, children take part in singing and dancing sessions, which staff join in with enthusiastically.
- The staff team is very well trained and this helps them to make sure that they meet children's needs at all times. Staff are meticulous about children's safety. For example, they use walkie-talkies to make sure that staff know about any child who is moving between outside and indoors. All entrances and exits are closely monitored to ensure that children only leave with the person who is authorised to collect them.
- Children's behaviour is excellent. Staff encourage them to be independent but remain close by to support them and to manage any behavioural incidents.

Children sit down and chat with their friends as they eat nutritious and filling food, such as crumpets, fruit and vegetable sticks. Children show excellent table manners and enjoy the social aspect of mealtimes.

- There are robust procedures in place to ensure that all persons who work with children are suitable to do so. There are effective contingency arrangements for staffing, so that children are always safely supervised and well supported. Young children have a designated key person, who knows them well, to meet their needs. The staff have close relationships with the school that the children attend. This helps to ensure that children's care is tailored to their individual needs and that their ongoing development can continue to be guided by the staff at the club.
- Parents enthusiastically praise the care that their children receive at the club. They appreciate that the staff know their children very well and take time to speak with parents at collection. There are strong lines of communication between the club and parents, which help staff make any changes they might need to meet children's needs.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff give the safety of children in their care the highest priority. They take time to listen carefully to children and monitor any changes in their well-being. Staff all understand how to identify signs and symptoms of potential abuse and/or neglect and know reporting procedures, both inside and outside of the club. This helps them to take swift action to protect children. Staff attend regular training to understand broader safeguarding issues, such as online safety and county lines activity.

## Setting details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	130544
<b>Local authority</b>	Hertfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10127259
<b>Type of provision</b>	Childcare on non-domestic premises
<b>Registers</b>	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
<b>Day care type</b>	Out-of-school day care
<b>Age range of children at time of inspection</b>	4 to 11
<b>Total number of places</b>	40
<b>Number of children on roll</b>	40
<b>Name of registered person</b>	The Big Top Committee
<b>Registered person unique reference number</b>	RP904001
<b>Telephone number</b>	07930 338 141
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	22 October 2014

## Information about this early years setting

The Big Top registered in 1999. It is committee run. It operates from a large school hall within Meryfield Primary School in Borehamwood. The club opens Monday to Friday during term time only. Sessions are from 3.15pm to 5pm. The club employs eight members of childcare staff. Of these, three have a relevant early years qualification at level 3. Four staff members hold appropriate playwork qualifications at level 2.

## Information about this inspection

### Inspector

Naomi Brown

## 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 inspector observed activities and assessed the impact they have on children's experiences.
- The inspector spoke to the manager, the deputy manager, staff, children and parents at appropriate times during the inspection.
- The inspector looked at relevant documentation, including evidence of the suitability of staff working in the club.
- The inspector had a tour of the areas used for care, indoors and outdoors, and viewed the range of resources available for children to access.

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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