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The Co-operative Childcare Blackbird  
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Our Reference EY401464

Dear Mr Michael St John Abbott

### **Outcome of monitoring visit for provision judged as inadequate**

An Ofsted inspector, Esther Gray, carried out a monitoring visit of your provision on 10/12/2013. This visit follows on from your inspection where the provision was judged to be inadequate.

### **Outcome of the visit**

As a result of our inspection on 11/07/2013, we sent you a welfare requirements notice.

The welfare requirement notice required the following actions to be addressed: ensure all staff have regard to the Government's statutory guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' in order that any concerns about children's safety or welfare are notified to agencies with statutory responsibilities without delay, take steps to ensure all staff understand the safeguarding policy and procedure and ensure all staff have up-to-date knowledge of safeguarding issues, assign each child a key person to ensure that every child's care is tailored to meet their individual needs, to help the child become familiar with the setting, offer a settled relationship for the child and build a relationship with their parents, ensure there are appropriate arrangements in place for the supervision of staff who have contact with children and families, which includes opportunities for staff to discuss any issues - particularly concerning children's development or well-being; identify solutions to address issues as they arise; and provide coaching to improve their personal effectiveness and implement an effective behaviour management policy and procedure to support children's personal, social and emotional development. Include how children will be enabled to manage their feelings and behaviour, and have clear and consistent boundaries and behaviour management strategies.

The welfare requirement notice also required the following action to be taken: ensure there is a clear and well-understood policy, and procedure, for assessing any

risks to children's safety, which identifies aspects of the environment that need to be checked on a regular basis, includes when and by whom those aspects will be checked, and how the risk will be removed or minimised, ensure that the premises, including outdoor spaces, are fit for purpose, clean and that staff comply with requirements of health and safety legislation (including hygiene requirements), ensure the ratio and qualification requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) are met and apply to the total number of staff available to work directly with children, deploy staff to meet the needs of all children and to ensure that children are adequately supervised, take steps to ensure written complaints are investigated relating to their fulfilment of the EYFS requirements and notify complainants of the outcome of the investigation within 28 days of having received the complaint and maintain records and obtain and share information (with parents and carers, other professionals working with the child, and the police, social services and Ofsted as appropriate) to ensure the safe and efficient management of the setting, and to help ensure the needs of all children are met.

A notice to improve was also issued that required the provider to: maintain a daily record of the names of the children being cared for on the premises, their hours of attendance and the names of each child's key person, implement the policy, and procedures, to safeguard children that covers the use of mobile phones and cameras in the setting, obtain and share information regularly with parents, carers, professionals and other settings to promote an effective two-way flow of information that informs planning and supports effective teaching, make the following information available to parents and/or carers: how the EYFS is being delivered in the setting; the range and type of activities and experiences provided for children, the daily routines of the setting, and how parents and carers can share learning at home; staffing in the setting and the name of their child's key person and their role and implement the policy and procedures, to promote equality of opportunity for children, which includes how the individual needs of all children, including those children with special educational needs or disabilities, will be included, valued and supported.

The notice to improve also identified two further actions to: improve staff's knowledge of the learning and development requirements in order to consider the individual needs, interests, and stage of development of each child and use this information to identify their next steps and plan a challenging and enjoyable experience for each child in all of the areas of learning and development and reflect on practice in order to evaluate and assess strengths and weaknesses and to drive improvement in children's learning and development.

The nursery registration was suspended on 15 July 2013. We took this step as we had reasonable cause to believe children were, or may have been, exposed to a risk of harm. The purpose of this suspension was to allow time for the circumstances to

be investigated and for steps to be taken to reduce or eliminate the risk of harm.

We believe children were, or may have been, exposed to a risk of harm as: suitably qualified, trained staff and managers have not been identified to ensure the safety of children since the suspension of senior staff and managers within the setting, ratios were inadequate to ensure the safety of children; evidenced by a large number of accidents and the number of staff suspended recently for safeguarding as a result of poor conduct, key people fail to know sufficient about the children they are responsible for to ensure their individual needs are safely met, there is poor deployment of staff and inadequate supervision of children by adults who are not sufficiently familiar with them, children are not adequately supervised at all times and the organisation and deployment of staff does not meet the needs of the children. Not all staff understand and can implement the safeguarding policy, leaving children at risk of harm or neglect. Children are put at risk where children have professional care plans and where the staff fail to take appropriate steps to assure their care plan is adequately met and children are at risk of harm whilst on outings and within the setting due to poor assessment of risk to children.

A monitoring visit was carried out on 22 July 2013 to check compliance with the actions identified on the welfare requirement notice. Good progress was being made on the initial priority action required. There were no children present during this visit. The suspension was lifted by Ofsted following this visit. We decided that the grounds for suspension no longer apply. The reason for this is all actions outlined within a welfare requirement notice issued on 16 July 2013 have been met during the monitoring visit on 22 July 2013. The risks identified within the notice have either now been minimised or removed. Satisfactory progress was being made towards all the actions issued, including those that cannot be assessed without children being present. A further monitoring visit was carried out on 10 September 2013 to find that good progress was being made towards all the actions issued and confirmed as met, this time with children present. Some further aspects of improvement were required in terms of how managers and staff reflect on practice in order to evaluate and assess strengths and weaknesses and to drive improvement in children's learning and development which was still emerging. The outcome of that a visit was that Ofsted would carry out a further monitoring visit to ensure that the changes and plans in place are sustained and that further action is taken to improve with regard to the leadership and management having suitable methods of oversight to sustain the improvement made.

Having considered all the evidence, the inspector is of the opinion that at this time the setting is making good improvement overall.

### **Overall effectiveness of the improvement and outcomes for children**

A further monitoring visit was carried out on 10 December 2013 to review the

improvements made at the previous monitoring visits and evaluate how this had been maintained and sustained. The good progress made across all areas was seen to have been sustained and maintained and further good progress made in the settled calm and focussed practice of the staff group observed with children present.

It was found that the wide-ranging action plan, which identified how the training of staff could be tested and assures parents and professionals that they were competent in childcare practice to safeguard children was continuing to good effect. The higher levels of monitoring by leaders and managers and systems to test how well the setting is doing has improved and steps have been taken to enable staff to feel well supported in their work with young children. There remains work to be done in improving staff practice in delivery of the learning and development aspects of childcare and education. The acting manager and deputy have continued to develop strong relationships with parents and within the reconstructed staff team. The appointment and induction of a new permanent manager will take place in January 2014. The new manager has a commitment from the organisation of good levels of support from the acting manager to ensure the continuity of progress made.

The inspector spoke with staff and some children on site and viewed all areas of the premises used by children during all visits. The considerable effort to review documents, clean and refresh the areas used by children and organise staff to ensure children and families will know who their key person is has been sustained and further enhanced by news letters, notices and invitations to parents to meetings. Further improvements have been made by opening up of some areas within rooms by removing doors to ensure children and staff are safe. Senior staff have continued to review the systems and structure of the nursery. The recruitment of an administrator to take administration tasks away from the manager has now taken place, which will allow the manager more time to monitor the care of children within the setting. Senior area managers acknowledged the need for change to the systems used to monitor settings in this National Chain of nurseries, ensuring information is available to them to reassure parents, carers and other professionals that the monitoring of practice is improved. Evidence of these improved changes are now being seen in practice in this setting.

Formal supervision of staff to provide support, coaching and training is well established and each member of staff has been interviewed and there are on-going supervision sessions being maintained. Induction for new recruits is on-going and the priority given to the staff having full details from the start of child protection procedures they must follow and evacuation of the setting is well supported. Staff are able to identify these when spoken to by the inspector. Staff have a positive attitude towards their nursery and a strong commitment to working as a team to make and sustain the improvements. Risks identified within the notice have either now been minimised or removed. Good progress has been made and sustained to meet all the actions issued and are confirmed as met with children present. The improvement required in terms of how managers and staff reflect on practice in order to evaluate and assess strengths and weaknesses and to drive improvement in children's learning and development is developing well and further training is identified to drive further improvement.

## **Next steps**

Having considered all the evidence the inspector is of the opinion that at this time:

- The setting has made good improvement. The next visit will be a full inspection.

I hope that you have found the visit helpful in promoting improvement in your setting. If you have any further queries please contact us on the number at the top of this letter.

Yours sincerely

Susan Gregory HMI  
National Director, Inspection Delivery