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Animal Crackers
Sandy Hill Farm
Fradley Junction
Alrewas, Burton-upon-Trent
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Our Reference 218403

Dear Mrs Maria De Lourdes Cooper

Monitoring for provision judged as inadequate

An Ofsted inspector, Lorraine Anne Lawton, monitored your provision on 24/01/2014 following your inspection where the provision was judged to be inadequate.

Outcome of monitoring

As a result of our inspection on 25/10/2013, we sent you a notice to improve.

The notice to improve asked Animal Crackers Limited to comply with the following actions:

ensure children are adequately supervised, taking into consideration any higher staff to child ratio identified to meet children's special educational needs and/or disabilities (Staff: child ratios)

provide effective supervision support, coaching and training for all staff to promote the interests of children (Staff qualifications, training, support and skills).

On 24 January 2014, we carried out an unannounced monitoring visit to check that the actions detailed in the notice to improve had been met. From the evidence gathered, the inspector assessed that Animal Crackers Limited have taken appropriate steps to address the actions.

Staffing arrangements take into consideration the individual needs of children because, where required, additional staff are engaged to give children one to one support. Staff rota's take into account children's individual attendance and staffing ratios are planned in advance. A higher ratio of staff to children and attention to children's needs ensures all children are kept safe and their well-being fostered at all times.

Staffing is consistent in each room and all staff know the children well. Consequently, this ensures children's individual needs are well managed in respect of their care, safety and learning and development. The inspector observed well qualified staff across the setting. In addition, an effective key person system enabled children's needs to be met through partnership with parents and other agencies. Staff encourage children to be independent learners because children can help themselves to drinks and snacks and decide for themselves, to play outdoors or indoors throughout parts of the day.

Staff receive support through regular supervision sessions and this now includes all room leaders. The records cover all elements of an appropriate supervision session that shows support for staff and promotes the interests of children. However not all records show how a member of staff is going to be supported where there is an identified area of practice or knowledge. The manager, who is responsible for the supervision sessions of room leaders is aware of this and aims to improve the consistency of the records by recording how a staff member is going to be trained or coached.

Since the last inspection, Animal Crackers Limited has sought to drive improvement through recent management training and has become a member of a nationally recognised association which offers support and advice. Animal Crackers Limited is in the process of updating the self-evaluation system to show how improvement has been made and has sought external help from a local school regarding staff supervision records. The local authority is also supporting the setting to improve and has identified key actions that are being implemented.

Animal Crackers Limited has also introduced a system whereby management responsibilities are shared with senior staff who are committed to the role. As a result, staff are increasing their knowledge and understanding about policies, procedures and topical matters through regular staff meetings. In addition, staff are supported to attend management training.

Having considered all the evidence, the inspector is of the opinion that the setting has taken prompt and effective action to address the points for improvement.

Next steps

The next step 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

Nick Hudson
National Director, Early Education