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One Step Ahead
Nevendon Playcentre
Nevendon Road
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Our Reference EY236469

Dear Mrs Donna Jane Doyle

Monitoring for provision judged as inadequate

An Ofsted inspector, Cheryl Langley / Naomi Brown, monitored your provision on 24/02/2014 following your inspection where the provision was judged to be inadequate.

Outcome of monitoring

As a result of our inspection on 26/06/2013, we sent you a welfare requirements notice.

This Welfare Requirement Notice required you to ensure children are adequately supervised at all times; particularly in relation to when children move in and out of the foyer area and the outside area, Early Years Foundation Stage Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements (EYFS) Staff: child ratio 3.27. This requirement was to be met by 6 September 2013.

You were also sent a Notice to improve which required you to: update the safeguarding policy to include the use of mobile phones and cameras in the setting (EYFS Child protection 3.4); ensure appropriate arrangements are in place for the supervision of staff (EYFS Staff qualifications, training, support and skills 3.19); notify Ofsted as soon as reasonably practicable of any significant event that is likely to affect the suitability of the early years provider (EYFS Changes that must be notified to Ofsted 3.76). These actions were to be met by the 6 September 2013.

Also included in this Notice to improve were two actions which required you to: improve staff's knowledge and understanding of how to promote the learning and development of young children to ensure all children make on-going progress (EYFS Learning and Development 1), and improve the educational and assessment programmes to include the seven areas of learning and on-going formative assessment to clearly track children's developmental progress (EYFS Learning and Development 2). These actions were to be met by 4 November 2013.

At the first monitoring visit which took place on 9 September 2013, steps had been taken to make sure children were safe as they moved between the inside and outside area and the foyer area. Staff were deployed effectively to supervise these areas at all times. Children only accessed the inside and outside area when accompanied by adults as part of a group activity. Staff are aware of their responsibilities with regard to supervising the children and keeping them within sight and hearing. Children are counted in and out of the building and this is recorded on a white board to register and check the numbers of children in and out.

All staff agreed to the mobile phone and camera policy to keep children safe and respect confidentiality. The use of mobile phones is not permitted whilst children are being cared for and phones are locked away during session times. Regular staff meetings and an appraisal system are used to address any issues that arise and to improve staff's personal effectiveness through training. Ofsted are notified of any significant event which is likely to affect the suitability of the early years provider or any person who cares for children on the premises.

At this visit we also found that the leadership and management team, along with their staff, were working closely with the local authority to improve their practice to promote the learning and development of children across the seven areas of learning. Children were encouraged to be independent and develop confidence and physical skills: they used a knife to spread butter on crackers, enjoyed playing musical instruments, made marks with pencils and manoeuvred small trains along a track. Staff were calm and attentive. New and settling children were made to feel welcome, well supported and soon appeared comfortable and able to take part in the activities. Praise was used purposefully to promote children's confidence and self-esteem. Children appeared happy and engaged in play. Positive relationships provided a calm and friendly environment for children returning to start the new term. A further monitoring visit was arranged to check the actions to be met by 4 November 2013 and to make sure the improvements that have been made were maintained.

At the second visit on 4 November 2013 there was marked improvement in planning, observation and assessment. Children's individual needs and interests, as well as their next steps, informed the planning. Staff used purposeful observation and assessment to show the progress children make. Parents and carers are encouraged to take part in their children's learning. Resources and activities had been enhanced to develop children's language and communication skills. Children were observed having fun making marks on clip boards in different play areas or singing impromptu nursery rhymes. They enjoyed the various sensory play available which included soap suds and manipulating sand. They were also supported in their interests, such as exploring water as they filled the drinking cups. Areas had been reorganised to promote different types of play and activities. This includes a separate area used with small groups, or to support one child. This might be to share stories or link sounds to letters or other activities which promote individual learning with a particular focus on communication and language.

Staff have been working on their knowledge, understanding and skills to enhance the quality of teaching. They are beginning to ask purposeful questions on some occasions to make children think critically and solve problems. This was to be checked at another monitoring visit to make sure improvement was on-going and the actions met maintained.

At the third monitoring visit on 24 February 2014, staff deployment continues to be organised effectively to keep children safe and support them well. Staff are working well as a team to plan purposeful play and activities to challenge the children and aid their development. They encourage the children to be independent and solve problems for themselves. For example, children are asked questions to make them think about how they can construct a railway track to determine direction. They are encouraged to talk about their solutions for this and complete the tasks independently, developing their co-ordination and control, skills in communication, co-operation and team work. Children make choices and are happy and engaged throughout the visit.

Staff are working well together to drive improvement. They are enthusiastic and committed to improving the outcomes for children. There are systems in place to help support them to continue to make progress.

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