

Early Learners 2

Bridle Road, Bootle, L30 4XS

Inspection date

Previous inspection date

02/05/2014

Not Applicable

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This inspection:

4

Previous inspection:

Not Applicable

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend

2

The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children

4

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision

4

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision is inadequate

- The management team have not ensured that there are always sufficient staff on duty to meet the ratio requirements of the Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage. As a result, children's safety and well-being cannot always be assured.
- Children's thinking skills are not consistently supported by staff as some do not always ask open-ended questions that encourage children to think about a response. In addition, systems to analyse data regarding the progress of specific groups of children are not yet fully developed.
- Older children's physical skills are limited at mealtimes as they only have a fork to use, so they cannot practise their cutting skills.

It has the following strengths

- Staff are proactive in teaching children to develop healthy habits, such as exercise and healthy eating.
- Children form warm, responsive relationships with their key person. Parents' comment that their children are very happy and are making good progress.
- Babies and toddlers experience lots of sensory opportunities and enjoy free access to an appropriately challenging outdoor area.

Information about this inspection

Inspections of registered early years provision are:

- scheduled at least once in every inspection cycle – the current cycle ends on 31 July 2016
- scheduled more frequently where Ofsted identifies a need to do so, for example where provision was previously judged inadequate
- brought forward in the inspection cycle where Ofsted has received information that suggests the provision may not be meeting the legal requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage or where assessment of the provision identifies a need for early inspection
- prioritised where we have received information that the provision is not meeting the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and which suggests children may not be safe
- scheduled at the completion of an investigation into failure to comply with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The provision is also registered on the compulsory part of the Childcare Register. This report includes a judgment about compliance with the requirements of that register.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed activities and care practices in the playrooms and within the outside play area.
- The inspector looked at relevant documentation, including planning, observations and assessment records. She also looked at a range of policies, staff rotas and attendance registers, as well as information used to assess the suitability of staff.
- The inspector spoke to children and staff throughout the day and to parents and carers when they came to collect children.
- The inspector examined a sample of organisational and health and safety documentation, discussed the nursery's self-evaluation form and held a meeting with the manager and deputy manager.
- The inspector conducted joint observations with the deputy manager, looking at the practice of staff.

Inspector

Valerie Aspinall

Full report

Information about the setting

Early Learners 2 was registered in 2013 on the Early Years Register and the compulsory part of the Childcare Register. It is situated in a purpose built premises in the Bootle area of Liverpool and is managed by a private provider. The nursery serves the local area and is accessible to all children. It operates from three playrooms and there is an enclosed area available for outdoor play. The nursery employs 10 members of childcare staff. Of these, eight hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3, including one with an appropriate qualification at level 6 and one at level 5. The nursery opens Monday to Friday, all year round. Sessions are from 7.30am until 6pm. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 96 children attending who are in the early years age group. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. It supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language. The nursery is a member of the National Day Nursery Association.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

To meet the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage the provider must:

- ensure that the ratio requirements are met at all times, to ensure children's well-being and safety is prioritised.

To further improve the quality of the early years provision the provider should:

- Support children's language and thinking further by, for example, improving questioning by staff so that children are encouraged to think about their response
- analyse the data collated from tracking children's progress in more depth, so that any variations in the progress of specific groups, such as girls and boys are successfully identified and used to support children's development
- enhance children's age-appropriate independence skills even further, by providing them with knives or spoons in addition to forks, at lunch time.

Inspection judgements

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend

Children engage in active play with a wide range of resources that support all seven areas of learning. Babies have lots of opportunities to explore using their senses, they enjoy

exploring a large tub of cooked spaghetti mixed with jelly, picking up handfuls, examining the texture through touch and taste. Staff model words, such as 'wibble, wobble', 'slimy' and 'slippery', as babies play, supporting their developing communication skills. These kind of activities encourage babies to experiment with their bodies and to engage all their senses, making their learning very active and exciting. Babies and toddlers have a rich environment with plenty of opportunities to investigate and explore. They enjoy playing independently, with staff close by for support. In particular, they enjoy the challenge of the outdoor space. They crawl around fixed play equipment, using it as a support to pull themselves up to a standing position. They investigate the floor level sand tray and show great concentration as they try to climb inside. Staff model how to fill and empty containers in the water tray, which encourages toddlers to join in and try for themselves. Staff read stories to individual children and sing songs in small groups before meal times. They repeat familiar action songs and number rhymes, so they help children to develop their communication and mathematical language. Babies who are less familiar hearing the English language feel comforted as staff are very proactive in learning and using simple words in their home language. This also encourages them to develop their language skills. Also, staff work very well in partnership with parents, who are encouraged to share simple nursery rhymes in their home language, and their unique culture.

Children are becoming active learners. For parts of the day, they move freely between the well-resourced indoor and outdoor areas. Staff have developed a bugs and butterflies theme as an extension of children's interest in spiders. Children confidently recall the features of the spider they saw in the garden and staff extend their knowledge by asking how many legs a spider has. Staff sensitively join children's play with dough, by modelling the dough to make a spider and counting out the eight legs the spider needs. Teaching through demonstration allows children to copy and feel a sense of achievement when they make their own spider. Pre-school age children develop the theme further through creative work. They make models of caterpillars and butterflies after listening to a popular story about a caterpillar. Two-year-old children are becoming increasingly independent. For example, staff encourage them to manage their own personal hygiene and to carry out simple tasks, such as pouring their own milk. Older children are learning to take turns and follow instructions, which helps them to become ready for school. For example, they listen carefully when staff explain how to make their own dough and why they must be careful with the hot water used to mix the dough. However, occasionally, teaching is less effective, as staff ask closed questions and do not always give children the encouragement to think about and respond to a question. For example, staff ask, 'does it look green?' rather than ask children about how food colouring is changing the colour of the play dough. Staff skilfully join in children's play and take opportunities to extend their vocabulary by mirroring the words children know and by modelling new words. For example, they repeat 'cement mixer' and model a steam roller as children complete a jigsaw puzzle. These activities complement the areas of continuous provision, such as construction, role play and writing areas. The good balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities results in children being engaged and busy in their play and ready to make the transition to school when the time comes.

All children are observed frequently. New children are assessed during the settling-in

period and this gives a starting point from which staff can plan to help them to make good progress. Staff build the next steps for children's learning into activities, which they have shown an interest in. For example, children who show an interest in superheroes, are encouraged to make models of them in the construction area, which supports their mathematical and physical development. Staff observe, evaluate and plan for each child and develop seasonal themes to extend children's learning further. For example, children have experienced creative and tasting activities to celebrate various cultural festivals, such as Easter and Chinese New Year. However, while children's progress overall is monitored, the tracking of specific groups of children, such as groups of boys and girls, is not fully embedded, to ensure that all children make the best progress they can. Link books ensure that when children also attend other settings, information about their learning is shared, resulting in a coordinated approach that supports their progress in both settings. Parents are encouraged to share their children's experiences at home through daily discussion with staff and by writing in their daily diary. As a result, staff know children very well and talk to them about their home life, which helps them to feel valued. Staff give verbal feedback to parents each day and record the meals, sleeps and nappy changes babies have. Regular termly summaries detail the progress children are making towards the early learning goals, which helps parents to continue their child's learning at home. They have access to their children's learning files at all times and staff plan to share these at regular parents' meetings.

The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children

During the inspection, a routine check of children's hours of attendance revealed that on two occasions earlier in the week, there were insufficient staff on duty to meet the ratio requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Both occasions were for the first hour of the day, between 7.30am and 8.30am, in the combined baby and toddler room. After 8.30am the ratios were met, as additional staff start work at 8.30am. In addition, on the day of inspection, three staff left the building during their lunch break, which resulted in insufficient staff being within sight or hearing of children for the number of children present. While many of the younger children have a nap after lunch, this is a breach of the requirements and puts children's safety and well-being at risk. However, at all other times of the day, children's needs are well met by warm and responsive staff. New children are joining this newly established nursery on a week by week basis. Staff support children's settling-in by being kind and affectionate. They make sure children have familiar comfort objects and in the baby room, staff follow each child's individual routine. 'Family boxes' hold photographs of children's families for them to look at, to reassure them throughout the day. Parents fill in an 'All about me' sheet, with details of children's care routines, likes and dislikes and developmental information and are invited to stay for any number of settling-in visits, depending on their child's needs. Consequently, effective key people get to know their children very well and children quickly develop emotional attachments to staff. This also extends to the manager, as children say 'I miss you' when she pops into the two-year-old room.

The nursery is well equipped, both indoors and outside. Children can independently select resources from the accessible storage and move freely between the areas of continuous provision. Free access to the outdoors and carefully planned cosy places to sit and relax,

mean that children can choose to be active or sit quietly during their play. The baby room is cosy and full of interesting objects to explore. Staff have used colours to create areas designed to stimulate or relax young babies, for example, a black and white cosy corner and a lilac area and the overall effect has a relaxing and homely feel. Staff gently remind children to share and take turns and praise them frequently. Children learn the 'Please and Thank You' song and staff model good manners and respectful relationships. Children are taught about kind hands and kind words, so they behave well and play cooperatively with each other. They are beginning to learn to play safely as staff remind them to sit safely on their chairs.

The nursery has taken a proactive approach to children's health as they have participated in a 'Healthy body, happy me' scheme. Children have been taught about healthy food choices by having tasting and cooking activities and drawing pictures of their favourite foods. Colourful displays of fruit and vegetables offer staff opportunities to remind children about a balanced diet. Older children have been shown how to feel their heart beating fast after exercise on the nursery's outdoor assault course and then to feel it again after they have had a rest. Consequently, children are being taught to develop the habits that contribute to a healthy lifestyle. Meals and snacks are healthy, with fresh fruit and vegetables offered every day. The nursery cook prepares all meals from scratch and children learn to serve themselves and pour their own drinks with staff support. However, older children are only offered a fork at lunch time, so they have to use their fingers to scoop food onto their fork and need staff to cut up their fish cakes. As a result, they are missing the opportunity to practise their developing physical skills. All ages of children enjoy the challenges of outdoor play. Older children ride bicycles, dig in the sandpit and enjoy trying to write on the outdoor easel. An assault course and a wooden bridge allow children to take measured risks and persist with challenging activities during their energetic play. Consequently, children are becoming active learners, which helps them become ready for school.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision

The management team have not ensured that sufficient staff are on duty at all times, in order to meet the ratio requirements of the Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage. Consequently, this breach of requirements means they cannot assure children's safety and well-being is prioritised during the times insufficient staff are present. The manager readily acknowledges that this is unacceptable and is considering appropriate action to rectify the issue. Managers and staff are fully aware of the steps to follow should they have any concerns about children's welfare and understand the procedures to take to help keep children safe from harm and abuse. Daily risk assessments are completed and several staff have current first-aid qualifications. Effective procedures have been put in place to ensure all staff are aware of children's dietary needs and appropriate records are kept for accidents and medication administered. The robust recruitment procedures help to ensure that staff are suitable and confident in their role of working with young children. Staff are vetted through the Disclosure and Barring Service, further helping to keep children safe.

The ongoing suitability of staff is monitored through the manager carrying out regular supervision meetings. This gives staff and the manager a good opportunity to discuss any training and development needs. However, the plans to implement peer observations have not yet been embedded, so staff have not been given specific targets to work towards, such as using more open-ended questions to support children's critical thinking skills. Consequently, some aspects of teaching are not as refined as others. Even so, staff do have opportunities to attend training courses, which have had a positive effect on children's learning. For example, staff have attended communication training, in order to support children's developing speech and forest school training has inspired staff to develop plans to create a 'mud kitchen' and an area for growing vegetables, so that outdoor learning is even more effective. Children's progress is tracked on a regular basis and having only been open six months, the manager has just collated data to identify if children are making steady progress in all areas of learning. However, as yet, there has been no analysis of different ages or groups of children, such as boys and girls, to see if they are making equal progress.

The manager and staff members fully acknowledge that their priority since opening has been to establish effective key person relationships, so that children form secure attachments. Nevertheless, they also have a clear vision for the development of the nursery and are driven by commitment and passion to provide a high quality learning environment. Parents are encouraged to take part in the self-evaluation process through the completion of parental questionnaires, in addition to regular discussions. Positive, good working relationships have been developed between parents and the nursery. This means that their children are fully supported while at the nursery. Parents spoken to at the inspection and written comments supplied by them are enthusiastic in their support. For example, parents say 'we are very happy and so is our child' and 'he loves it and has learnt so much in just a few weeks'. Relationships with other professionals, such as, speech and language therapists, are developing as staff begin to identify children who may need additional support. Although, no children have yet moved onto other settings or reception classes, the manager has clear ideas about how children will be effectively supported to make the transition to school. She intends to invite teachers to come and visit children in the nursery and share their learning and development records. Support from the local authority early years team and a close working relationship with the local children's centre and the nursery's sister setting ensure that the manager and staff have ample opportunities to share good practice.

The Childcare Register

The requirements for the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are

Met

What inspection judgements mean

Registered early years provision

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	Outstanding provision is highly effective in meeting the needs of all children exceptionally well. This ensures that children are very well prepared for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 2	Good	Good provision is effective in delivering provision that meets the needs of all children well. This ensures children are ready for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	The provision is not giving children a good standard of early years education and/or there are minor breaches of the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. We re-inspect nurseries and pre-schools judged as requires improvement within 12 months of the date of inspection
Grade 4	Inadequate	Provision that is inadequate requires significant improvement and/or enforcement action. The provision is failing to give children an acceptable standard of early years education and/or is not meeting the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be monitored and inspected again within six months of the date of this inspection.
Met		There were no children present at the time of the inspection. The inspection judgement is that the provider continues to meet the requirements for registration.
Not met		There were no children present at the time of the inspection. The inspection judgement is that the provider does not meet the requirements for registration.

Inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted 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.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY467810
Local authority	Sefton
Inspection number	942966
Type of provision	Full-time provision
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 8
Total number of places	72
Number of children on roll	96
Name of provider	Kenneth Alan Cosgrove
Date of previous inspection	not applicable
Telephone number	07836616299

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Type of provision

For the purposes of this inspection the following definitions apply:

Full-time provision is that which operates for more than three hours. These are usually known as nurseries, nursery schools and pre-schools and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the higher fee for registration.

Sessional provision operates for more than two hours but does not exceed three hours in any one day. These are usually known as pre-schools, kindergartens or nursery schools

and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the lower fee for registration.

Childminders care for one or more children where individual children attend for a period of more than two hours in any one day. They operate from domestic premises, which are usually the childminder's own home. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Out of school provision may be sessional or full-time provision and is delivered before or after school and/or in the summer holidays. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. Where children receive their Early Years Foundation Stage in school these providers do not have to deliver the learning and development requirements in full but should complement the experiences children receive in school.

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