

The Elms Nursery School

8 Richmond Road, Ramsgate, Kent, CT11 9QP



Inspection date

30 July 2015

Previous inspection date

26 September 2013

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	Previous inspection:	Good	2
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		Requires improvement	3
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		Requires improvement	3
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		Requires improvement	3
The setting does not meet legal requirements for early years settings			

Summary of key findings for parents

This provision requires improvement. It is not yet good because:

- The key-person arrangements are not robust enough to ensure that staff work closely in partnership with parents.
- Staff do not consistently seek information about children's learning prior to attending the nursery. Planning and assessment arrangements are also inconsistent. Consequently, the activities staff plan to support children's learning are not sufficiently targeted to meet all children's individual needs.
- There are not enough resources readily available to help children develop their early writing skills throughout the daily routine.

It has the following strengths

- Children are happy, confident and secure because staff build positive relationships with them.
- The owners are passionate and committed to improving the setting. Although the changes in staffing have affected the quality of the provision, they are striving to provide good care and education for children.
- Staff teach children through a range of exciting activities, which interest children and supports their concentration and problem solving skills.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- improve the arrangements for assessing children's learning by: a) obtaining information from all parents about what children know and can do before attending the nursery and b) ensuring that all practitioners assess children's progress across the areas of learning and use this information effectively to plan for their progress
- improve the key person arrangements in order to ensure that every child's learning and care is tailored to meet their individual needs and to engage and support parents and/or carers in guiding their child's development at home
- improve the quality of teaching to ensure it is consistently good or better by providing a wider range of opportunities for children to develop their early writing skills throughout the daily routine.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed children during activities, inside and out to assess the quality of teaching.
- The inspector held a meeting with the managers, who are the owners.
- The inspector held discussions with children and parents to take account of their views.
- The inspector looked at samples of observations, assessments and planning to assess children's progress.
- The inspector conducted a joint observation with a manager, who is also one of the owners.
- The inspectors viewed a range of documents, including staff records and policies.

Inspector

Linda du Preez

Inspection findings

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend. This requires improvement

The quality of teaching is variable at times. Staff do not gather information from all parents about children's development to gather an accurate picture of what children know and can do when they first start at nursery. Staff closely observe children and use this information to assess their progress, but some staff do not use this information to plan effectively for children's learning. Nevertheless, staff promote children's communication and language development well, because their interactions with children are strong. They consistently use open-ended questioning to challenge and extend children's thinking. Overall, the nursery has a wide range of toys and resources to support children's learning. Children delight in activities such as counting songs and games, where staff skilfully use a range of props and resources to engage them. Consequently, children develop useful skills in counting as they learn to concentrate. However, there are insufficient writing resources available for children to explore and develop their early literacy skills. Staff encourage children to be independent in readiness for their move to school. There are strong links with other early years settings and local schools. These good partnerships help to support continuity for children as they prepare for the next stage in their learning.

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

Staffing arrangements are not clear to parents. As a result, they do not always know who the main staff member is who looks after their child. However, managers and staff support children well because they take the time to develop relationships with them and their families. Staff are positive role models and interact well with children, which results in a calm, relaxed and homely atmosphere. Staff teach children about safety and to care for their environment as they help to tidy up. Children have ample opportunities to learn about healthy lifestyles by getting exercise outside and through the range of nutritious healthy meals offered. Mealtimes are positive and social experiences, where children are independent and play an active role in setting up and clearing away.

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

The owners play an active role in managing the nursery. They are highly qualified and most staff hold relevant early years qualifications at level 3 or above. Managers and staff attend a range of training courses to enhance the practice in the nursery. However, the instability in staffing has weakened the self-evaluation process. Consequently, managers have not identified all weaknesses and they are not fully complying with the statutory requirements for the Early Years Foundation Stage. In addition, they have not identified inconsistencies in the educational programmes. Nevertheless, they demonstrate a willingness to improve and a commitment to the continual development of the whole provision. Staff demonstrate a clear knowledge and understanding of the requirements to safeguard children. There are clear systems in place to recruit staff and monitor their performance. Parents say that 'staff are caring', 'children are 'happy' and become 'confident', as a result of attending the nursery.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY252581
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	1022790
Type of provision	Full-time provision
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 5
Total number of places	74
Number of children on roll	28
Name of provider	Tender Shoots Limited
Date of previous inspection	26 September 2013
Telephone number	01843 852727

The Elms Nursery School registered in 2003 and is owned by Tender Shoots Limited . It operates over three floors in a semi-detached building, situated in Ramsgate, Kent. Access to the different floors is via steps. The nursery is open each weekday from 7am to 7pm for 51 weeks of the year. The nursery is in receipt of funding for the provision of free early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. The nursery employs seven members of staff. The managers and deputy manager all hold Early Years Professional Status and a degree. Three staff hold a National Vocational Qualification at level 3 and one holds a National Vocational Qualification at level 2.

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