

Inspection of Stephens Early Years Centre

Oakley Road, Southampton, Hampshire SO16 4LG

Inspection date:

9 September 2019

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Outstanding

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision requires improvement

The staff team provides a welcoming atmosphere that helps children settle into their new environment. Staff are kind and nurturing, and support children with their individual needs. The children know the daily routines well. They develop positive relationships with the staff and know who to go to for comfort or reassurance. Children who need additional help are well supported with their emotional well-being. Staff do not always gather sufficient information about what children already know when they start. This means that some staff do not successfully build on what the children can already do. As a result, some planned activities do not challenge children's learning. The manager works effectively with external agencies and families. Staff have a high regard for ensuring children feel safe and cared for at the pre-school. Children's early literacy skills are promoted through a weekly visit from a librarian. This enables children to take books home to share with their families. However, some staff do not model or engage in regular meaningful conversations with children, so some children's speaking and communication skills are not supported effectively. Children enjoy playing with their friends. They are developing good imaginations as they laugh together with their friends when they pretend to be hairdressers. Staff speak regularly with parents about their children's needs and discuss what activities their child has been taking part in. This ensures that parents feel well informed about their child's learning and development.

What does the early years setting do well and what does it need to do better?

- Although staff play alongside children and make activities entertaining, they do not always promote and extend learning well enough. For example, when children showed an interest in numbers during a 'fishing' activity, staff did not use this opportunity to develop children's early understanding of numbers further.
- Children behave appropriately, feel secure and are learning simple rules. Staff support children's good behaviour, they offer lots of praise for children and give gentle reminders to walk when inside.
- Children are learning how to share and take turns as they share resources in the role-play area.
- Staff respond well to children who have English as an additional language. They take time to speak to parents to learn simple words from the child's first language, which helps the children to feel valued. Staff give children lots of encouragement and praise.
- Children's independence is limited at times. Staff prepare children's snacks, pour drinks and lay out children's lunch boxes. This prevents children from further developing their self-care skills.
- Staff are attentive and supportive in helping children with their potty training.

Parents are fully involved in this process and praise the staff for their support and positive encouragement.

- The manager does not have effective systems in place to support staff in their professional development. They have an overly optimistic view of staff practice and have not accurately identified or addressed weaknesses. This has led to a decline in the quality of teaching since the last inspection.
- Children enjoy taking part in planned activities. For example, they are interested in exploring the toy skeleton and talking about different parts of the body. Staff support this by introducing familiar songs about the body.
- Children enjoy their limited time in the outside play areas. They excitedly run, jump and hunt for 'bones' with magnifying glasses. However, this is abruptly stopped when staff direct children to return indoors. This does not help children to develop skills in managing their play to extend their own learning.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The manager and staff know what procedures to follow should they have any concerns about children's welfare. The manager regularly updates her knowledge through training and is aware of wider safeguarding issues and of safe recruitment procedures. Staff are aware of signs and symptoms of abuse and know the procedures to follow if an allegation is made. Staff know the external agencies to contact. Staff complete effective risks assessments to ensure the premises are secure.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- improve supervision arrangements to monitor staff performance effectively, to help identify weaknesses in practice and target support to raise the quality of their teaching to a consistently good level
- improve teaching to ensure that staff interaction is purposeful in supporting learning and activities that challenge children to build on what they already know
- help children to further develop their independence and self-care skills in managing tasks for themselves, for example at snack and lunchtime.

Setting details

Unique reference number	131571
Local authority	Southampton
Inspection number	10112933
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children	2 to 4
Total number of places	42
Number of children on roll	26
Name of registered person	Doswell, Kay Alison
Registered person unique reference number	RP906805
Telephone number	02380 784 069
Date of previous inspection	21 May 2014

Information about this early years setting

Stephens Early Years Centre registered in 1997. It operates from a dance studio in Shirley, Southampton. The setting cares for two-, three- and four-year-old children who are funded. The setting supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language. The setting opens each weekday during school term time. A breakfast session runs from 7.30am. The sessions are from 8.30am to 3pm. There is a holiday playscheme offered during the summer holidays that runs from 10am to 2pm. There are five full-time staff that work with the children. Of these, one has early years professional status and all others have qualifications in line with their roles and responsibilities.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Gorete Farkhad

Inspection activities

- The manager and the inspector completed a learning walk to explore the manager's approach to early education.
- The inspector observed the quality of teaching both indoors and outdoors, to assess the impact this has on children's learning.
- The inspector completed a joint observation with the manager.
- The inspector spoke to parents and children and took account of their views.
- The inspector sampled some documentation, including staff suitability records.

We carried out this inspection 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.

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