

Inspection of Apple Tree Day Care Nursery

304 Cressing Road, Braintree, Essex CM7 3PG

Inspection date: 29 October 2019

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
The quality of education	Requires improvement
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
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

Children demonstrate they feel secure and happy at the nursery. They especially enjoy the stimulating outdoor area. Staff provide a wide range of activities which interest children and motivate them to learn. However, when indoors, the staff in the toddler room lead group activities for too long. This results in children losing focus.

Managers and staff use their knowledge of children to identify any gaps in their learning. For example, they have noticed that some younger children's communication and language development is low. Managers implement extra support for staff to ensure these gaps in learning are closed. The managers and senior staff understand the requirement for the progress check for children aged between two and three years. However, staff with key-person responsibility for these children have no understanding of the purpose of these checks.

A recent higher than average turnover of staff has added extra pressure on the dedicated manager. Her recruitment procedures are good and help to ensure staff are suitable to work with children. The manager or deputy manager meet with staff through their induction to discuss their practice and teaching skills. Staff report they feel well supported by them. However, the provider does not have any supervision arrangements in place to support the manager's continuous improvement and development.

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

- Staff working with babies build on their literacy skills well. Babies enjoy looking at books with staff. They point at pictures that interest them and know how to turn pages in books. Staff use these opportunities to extend children's communication and language development, for example by introducing them to new words.
- When all ages of children play outside together, they learn how to share and take turns with others. Older children attending the holiday club are good role models and support the younger children well.
- Staff gain information from parents on children's early experiences and what they can already do when they start to attend the nursery. This helps them to identify children's starting points in learning and look for ways to build on their experiences. However, some key persons working with two-year-olds have no knowledge of the progress check for children between the ages of two and three years. This means they do not have the best possible understanding of how to support their key children's ongoing development.
- Children engage in effective play and learning outdoors. Staff help children to practise early writing skills, such as with chalks on boards. Children and staff

find quiet areas to look at books together or to engage in singing and playing instruments.

- Staff skilfully support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. They work closely with parents and other professionals to find out the best possible ways to support children. Parents describe the support they receive from the nursery as 'invaluable'.
- Toddlers are full of energy and highly active outdoors. For example, they engage well in digging and exploring the mud kitchen. However, indoors, staff do not identify when children are losing their focus in overly long group times. This results in children becoming restless and being repeatedly told to sit still.
- Children are developing good creative and imaginative skills. A pile of cardboard boxes ignites their curiosity. Children make the boxes into vehicles, such as boats and aeroplanes. They make up stories about where they are going. Staff follow the children's lead and readily find them other resources to extend their play.
- Staff receive regular coaching and supervision from the manager and deputy. They look for ways to help staff to improve their knowledge and teaching skills, for example by undertaking training. However, the provider does not have any supervision arrangements in place for the manager, in order to support her ongoing development and well-being.
- Parents speak positively about the nursery and staff. They feel their children are safe and cared for well. Staff help parents to understand their children's development and how they can support their learning at home.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff complete safeguarding training as soon as they start to work at the nursery. They understand how to recognise the signs and symptoms that may raise concerns about a child's welfare. They know how to make referrals both within the setting and to relevant agencies. Managers regularly review their safeguarding policies and procedures to ensure that they are relevant and up to date. These are shared with the provider and staff to help them to further understand their responsibilities.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

To meet the requirements of the early years foundation stage, the provider must:

	Due date
improve teaching in the toddler room, to ensure that children stay engaged and motivated in learning	29/11/2019

make sure that staff who have key-person responsibility for two-year-olds know about and understand how to use the progress check for children aged between two and three years	29/11/2019
implement appropriate supervision arrangements to support the manager's ongoing development.	29/11/2019

Setting details

Unique reference number	650048
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10127265
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children	0 to 10
Total number of places	51
Number of children on roll	85
Name of registered person	Just Like Home Day Nurseries Ltd
Registered person unique reference number	RP520403
Telephone number	01376 321858
Date of previous inspection	4 September 2013

Information about this early years setting

Apple Tree Day Care Nursery registered in 1997. The nursery is open five days a week from 7.45am until 6pm, for 51 weeks of the year. An out-of-school club operates from 3pm until 6pm through school term times and from 7.45am until 6pm in school holidays. There are 15 members of staff, including the manager. Of these, 11 hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 or above, including the manager who holds a level 5 qualification.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Jill Hardaker

Inspection activities

- The inspector took a tour of the nursery with the manager. They talked about how the manager organises the nursery and the play and learning experiences they provide for children.
- The inspector observed the quality of teaching during activities indoors and outside and assessed the impact this has on children's learning.
- The manager and the inspector completed a joint observation and discussed how observations of staff lead into supervision meetings.
- The inspector spoke with staff and children during the inspection. She held a meeting with the manager and reviewed a sample of records, including safeguarding policies and procedures.
- The inspector spoke to a number of parents during the inspection and took account of their views.

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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