

Kids Planet Day Nurseries Limited

Monitoring visit report

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Name of lead inspector: Alison Cameron Brandwood, Her Majesty's Inspector

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Type of provider: Independent learning provider

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Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

From October 2018, Ofsted undertook to carry out monitoring visits to all newly directly funded providers of apprenticeship training provision which began to be funded from April 2017 or after by the Education and Skills Funding Agency and/or the apprenticeship levy. This monitoring visit was undertaken as part of those arrangements and as outlined in the 'Further education and skills inspection handbook', especially the sections entitled 'Monitoring visits' and 'Monitoring visits to providers that are newly directly publicly funded'. The focus of these visits is on the themes set out below.

Kids Planet Day Nurseries Limited (Kids Planet) is an independent learning provider based in Cheshire. It specialises in training for the early years sector. Apprentices are based in 53 nurseries across the North West and East Midlands. The nurseries are part of the Kids Planet Day Nurseries Limited group. At the time of the visit, there were 234 apprentices in learning. Over half of apprentices study level 3 early years educator standard and almost one third study level 2 early years practitioner standard. A few apprentices study level 2 and level 3 children and young people's workforce framework.

The impact of COVID-19 (coronavirus) has been taken into account in the findings and progress judgements below.

Themes

How much progress have leaders made in ensuring that the provider is meeting all the requirements of successful apprenticeship provision?

Reasonable progress

Leaders and managers have a clear strategy and vision to provide high-quality training for apprentices in nursery settings. They plan the curriculum to meet the principles and requirements of an apprenticeship. Leaders identified that during the COVID-19 pandemic, a few apprentices did not get enough time to complete their off-the-job training. To maintain ratios in the nursery, apprentices worked during their normal off-the-job working time. Leaders have put in place appropriate actions for apprentices to catch up.

Leaders, managers and tutors are suitably experienced and qualified in early years to carry out their roles. Tutors attend professional development activities such as physical activity and nutrition training. This ensures their knowledge and skills remain current.

Leaders and managers gather information through quality processes to identify strengths and weaknesses. They put in place and monitor improvement actions. Leaders provide training for tutors to improve how they embed mathematics into the curriculum. The number of apprentices who passed their functional skills examination first time has improved significantly.

Kids Planet is a family run business, and the governance board comprises senior leaders who are related to each other. Consequently, it is unclear how the governors hold the chief executive officer to account for the quality of education that apprentices receive.

Governors and leaders do not have sufficient oversight of the progress that apprentices make in developing their knowledge, skills and behaviours from their starting points. This hinders their opportunity to identify rapidly, and swiftly rectify issues or concerns as they arise.

What progress have leaders and managers made in ensuring that apprentices benefit from high-quality training that leads to positive outcomes for apprentices? Reasonable progress

Apprentices gain substantial new knowledge, skills and behaviours because of their apprenticeship. They adapt play activities for children with a physical disability. Apprentices encourage children with speech and language difficulties to communicate. They take on extra responsibilities such as acting as a key person to a child in their care. Apprentices are proud of the contribution they make to the nursery they work in.

Tutors deliver the curriculum in a logical order. Apprentices learn and gain essential knowledge they need first, including health and safety and safeguarding. Apprentices grow in character, discussing confidently behavioural issues with parents. They move onto topics that benefit them and their nursery setting, such as supporting the planning and delivery of activities.

Tutors adapt the curriculum, based on the experience apprentices gain in the nursery. They prioritise teaching positive behaviour techniques to apprentices who struggle with children with behavioural issues. Apprentices find appropriate resolutions to conflicts, such as using a biting necklace or bracelet to prevent a child from biting others.

Tutors and line managers effectively coordinate on- and off-the-job training. While learning about bottle feeding, apprentices gain supervised experience in the baby room. In contrast, leaders do not ensure that nursery managers consistently contribute to the development of their apprentices' curriculum. A few apprentices on level 3 early years educator do not benefit from a sufficiently challenging curriculum.

Apprentices learn about British values that tutors contextualise to nursery settings. They put what they learn into practice. Apprentices encourage children to speak to each other respectfully, for example by politely asking for a toy.

A few apprentices are not well prepared for their final assessments. They have a limited understanding of the requirements of the assessments and are unaware of the grades they could achieve.

How much progress have leaders and managers made in ensuring that effective safeguarding arrangements are in place? Reasonable progress

Leaders put in place appropriate safeguarding practices and procedures. Staff report concerns to the designated safeguarding lead who makes appropriate referrals to external agencies if necessary.

Leaders provide regular safeguarding updates to tutors which they cascade to apprentices. Updates include local area concerns such as county lines and female genital mutilation. Apprentices develop a deeper understanding of issues that have increased during the COVID-19 pandemic, such as coercive control and domestic violence. Leaders provide 'mindful moments' training to help maintain apprentices' positive mental health and well-being.

Apprentices feel safe and know who to contact if they have a concern. They are aware of the whistle-blowing policy and feel confident to use it should the need arise. Apprentices understand how to keep themselves and the children in their care safe, including online. They describe confidently a range of safeguarding scenarios, such as spotting bruising on a child and signs of neglect.

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