

Inspection of Elms Montessori School & Day Nursery

2 Elm Lane, Lower Earley, Berkshire RG6 5UF

Inspection date:

7 December 2021

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Inadequate

Leadership and management

Inadequate

Overall effectiveness at previous
inspection

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is inadequate

Children's safety cannot be fully assured. Leaders do not make sure that newly recruited staff have a clear understanding of all signs which could indicate a child is at risk of harm. In addition, leaders do not make sure that agency staff have a clear enough understanding of the setting's own safeguarding procedures.

Children do not consistently benefit from a stimulating environment. Staff do not consistently provide resources and activities or engage with children to support the intentions for their learning effectively. As a result, children do not spend significant periods of time engaging in meaningful learning and tend to flit between activities. Nonetheless, children are happy and enjoy playing and exploring in the environment. For example, babies are beginning to enjoy imaginative play in the role-play kitchen. They have fun pretending to make food and drinks for staff, who respond warmly to children as they play alongside them.

Children enjoy a range of experiences in the local area, which is something leaders recognise they have missed out on during the COVID-19 pandemic. This includes taking train and bus trips to visit museums and the theatre. Children have regular opportunities to visit areas in the local countryside to run around, splash in puddles and learn about wildlife. This helps them to gain a wider understanding of the world around them.

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

- Staff regularly monitor children's development and know the children in their care well. This information builds into the overall intentions for children's ongoing learning. However, staff do not always deliver the curriculum effectively to make sure that children consistently benefit from intended learning. As a result, children do not always demonstrate positive attitudes towards learning. They quickly lose concentration during activities or move on to something else. This has an impact on the extent to which they can make progress in their development.
- The quality of staff interactions with children to support their learning is too variable. At times, staff do not readily interact with children during activities to provide sufficient challenge and develop their communication and language skills. On occasions, there is an emphasis on staff completing routine tasks or supervising children rather than extending their learning. Nonetheless, where practice is positive, staff ask children questions, sing and read stories, and allow children time to express themselves.
- The systems in place for the induction of recently recruited staff and agency staff are not effective in ensuring that staff have a clear understanding of the policies and procedures in place to keep children safe. For example, agency staff

are responsible for supervising children during mealtimes. However, they are not always aware if there are any children attending with specific dietary needs or allergies. This has an impact on children's safety and well-being.

- The manager undertakes regular supervisions with staff and holds regular team meetings where they talk about practice and are able to contribute towards the content of the curriculum. However, this is not fully effective in making sure that staff receive effective coaching and professional development to ensure that practice is consistently good. Although the manager receives regular supervision, leaders have failed to monitor the provision closely enough to make sure the requirements are consistently met. As a result, some improvements made following previous inspections are not maintained.
- Partnership with parents is positive. Parents report on the settling-in process and feel that their children are happy and enjoy their time within the setting. Staff regularly share information with parents about their child's development and gather detailed information about children when they first start attending. The setting shares regular newsletters each month which keep parents informed of the activities planned for their children overall.
- Staff positively support children's independence skills. Younger children are learning how to put on their outdoor clothes when they go to play in the garden area. They know how to promote their own health, such as when they wash their hands after using the toilet, before mealtimes, and when they sneeze. Staff encourage children to self-serve their own food at mealtimes.
- Children understand expectations for behaviour because staff provide clear and consistent messages. Staff manage minor disputes between children calmly and kindly. As a result, children of all ages are learning the importance of sharing toys, taking turns and being kind to their friends. Strategies in place to manage any specific issues are effective in meeting individual children's needs and are implemented in partnership with parents.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

The manager does not ensure that newly recruited staff and agency staff have a clear understanding of the safeguarding policy and procedure. As a result, not all staff have a clear understanding of the signs which could indicate a child is at risk of harm. Agency staff do not have a clear understanding of the setting's own safeguarding procedures or who to go to if they have any concerns about a child's welfare. The environment where children play is safe and secure. The manager makes sure that there are always sufficient paediatric first-aid trained staff on the premises.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

The provision is inadequate and Ofsted intends to take enforcement action.

We will issue a Welfare Requirements Notice requiring the provider to:

	Due date
improve the systems in place for the induction of newly recruited and agency staff so that they have a clear understanding of safeguarding matters, the policies and procedures to keep children safe, and individual children's health needs and dietary requirements	31/01/2022
ensure that the supervision of staff and monitoring of staff practice is effective in providing coaching and professional development opportunities to raise the quality of teaching to a consistently good standard, and to make sure that the requirements are securely met at all times.	31/01/2022

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

	Due date
improve the implementation of the curriculum to make sure that all children benefit from stimulating and challenging learning opportunities in order to help all children be consistently engaged and motivated in their learning	28/02/2022
develop staff skills to enable them to provide consistently good interactions with children to help extend children's learning, provide sufficient challenge and support their overall speech and language development.	28/02/2022

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY537446
Local authority	Wokingham
Inspection number	10133599
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	0 to 4
Total number of places	50
Number of children on roll	28
Name of registered person	Swans Day Nurseries Ltd
Registered person unique reference number	RP526215
Telephone number	01184676743
Date of previous inspection	4 December 2019

Information about this early years setting

Elms Montessori School & Day Nursery registered in 2016. The nursery is located near Reading, Berkshire. It opens each weekday from 7.30am until 6pm for 50 weeks of the year, closing for a week at Christmas and Easter. The nursery offers term-time and all-year-round options. It offers care for children aged from six months to five years. There are 10 members of staff, including the manager. The manager holds a level 5 qualification. There are five staff who hold early years qualifications at level 2 or above, and one staff member is completing training to gain a recognised qualification.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Carla Roberts

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the provider received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the provider and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the provider.
- The inspector talked to staff at appropriate times during the inspection to find out how they monitor children's development and to assess their understanding of the policies and procedures in place to keep children safe.
- The manager and the inspector carried out a joint observation of a group activity.
- The inspector observed the quality of education being provided, and assessed the impact that this was having on children's learning.
- Parents shared their views of the setting with the inspector.
- The inspector looked at relevant documentation and reviewed evidence of the suitability of staff working in the nursery.

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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