

Inspection of Southborough Pre-school

Community Centre, Crundwell Road, Southborough, Kent TN4 0LL

Inspection date: 25 January 2022

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

Outstanding

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is inadequate

Weaknesses in safeguarding procedures compromise children's safety and welfare. The registered provider and the manager do not consistently follow procedures for safer recruitment of staff and committee. Staff members do not take consistent action in responding to safeguarding issues, such as the procedure for recording pre-existing injuries. The arrangements to support children's learning and development require further improvement. Leaders and managers do not ensure that staff provide a consistent and effective curriculum for all children.

Children have formed strong bonds with the staff. Most children arrive smiling and happy to start the day. They have adapted well to changes due to the COVID-19 pandemic, including confidently leaving their parents at the door. For those children who appear more anxious on arrival, the caring and nurturing staff are quick to give them cuddles and reassurance. They quickly settle and are soon absorbed in their chosen activities.

Children enjoy themselves at the pre-school. They demonstrate a keen desire to explore and discover the environment. For example, children become absorbed and focused as they explore the texture of sand, build with large bricks and complete jigsaw puzzles. Children turn to staff for support when they face challenges or struggle to regulate their emotions.

Children follow their interests as they engage in activities such as drawing, role play and birdwatching. Staff encourage children to develop their understanding and knowledge in meaningful ways. For example, children name 'binoculars' when they watch the birds and demonstrate good counting skills as they play 'What's' the time, Mr Wolf?'.

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

- The registered provider has failed to notify Ofsted about all committee members so that suitability checks can be carried out. Committee members take an active role in the running of the pre-school. The manager and the registered person have a poor understanding of the procedures for safer recruitment. Not all staff have had sufficient checks to establish their suitability. This does not ensure children's safety and welfare. In addition, some of the required documents were not readily available at the start of the inspection.
- The manager fails to ensure that staff implement safeguarding procedures consistently. They do not always record significant information, for example when a child arrives at the pre-school with a pre-existing injury.
- The manager and the registered provider are hard-working leaders. They work closely with staff to create a warm and welcoming environment for children.

Together, they ensure the well-being of all staff. The manager holds regular meetings with staff. However, the staff supervision is not used effectively to target and monitor staff professional development and practice further. The manager has developed good relationships with other professionals, such as teachers.

- The manager plans a curriculum to support children's learning, particularly for children's personal, social and emotional skills. She is aware that children have missed out on opportunities to make friendships with other children during the COVID-19 pandemic. Staff implement the curriculum by spontaneously supporting children as they play. However, staff do not sequence learning sufficiently or challenge children to help extend their learning even further.
- Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language are well supported. Staff work very closely with parents and other agencies to support children's individual needs. This means that, for these children, learning is well planned. Early support is quickly identified to close any gaps in their development.
- Children develop language skills. Staff model good speaking skills and encourage children to listen carefully. Children regularly hear new words and phrases through stories and songs. However, during some parts of the day, such as mealtimes, not all staff use consistent strategies to support children's developing communication and language skills to the highest levels.
- Children love books and storytelling. Staff encourage them to 'vote' for a favourite story for group times. Children confidently remember the words to familiar songs and stories, and enthusiastically join in. During story time, staff busy themselves with tasks leading to unnecessary noise. This makes it harder for children to listen and concentrate. Parents can borrow books to read with children at home.
- Children develop their physical skills well. They demonstrate independence, confidence and control. For example, they run, slide, rock and balance on large equipment outside. Children develop their confidence as they learn to manage risks, for example when they climb on crates outside. They enjoy exercising to music as they become aware of the muscles and strength in their bodies. Children practise using smaller muscles as they draw, paint and use scissors.
- Children develop good hygiene routines. They know that they must wash their hands when they arrive at the pre-school, before eating and after using the toilet. Staff help children to become more independent in coping with their personal needs, such as putting on coats and going to the toilet by themselves.
- Parents admire the commitment staff showed to them and the children during the COVID-19 pandemic. Staff made efforts to remain in contact and to provide daily activities for their children to achieve at home. They continue to keep parents informed about their children's learning.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

Safer recruitment is ineffective. This means suitability checks are not completed on

the adults working with children, and Ofsted are not informed of new committee members. Staff do not consistently record or share some information that helps keep children safe, for example if a child arrives in the setting with a pre-existing injury. This makes it difficult for staff to assess the reason for changes they might see in children's behaviour or well-being. Staff do know how to refer their concerns if they are worried about a child being at risk of harm. When required, information is shared with other professionals in a timely manner. Staff have received training in wider safeguarding issues, such as grooming and the 'Prevent' duty guidance. They maintain a clean, safe and secure environment.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

To meet the requirements of the early years foundation stage and Childcare Register the provider must:

	Due date
take action to provide Ofsted with the necessary information for checking the suitability of committee members	11/02/2022
implement robust safer recruitment procedures to check that adults working with children are suitable to do so	11/02/2022
ensure all procedures for safeguarding children are consistently applied in practice, in line with local safeguarding partnership guidance	11/02/2022
ensure required documents are readily available for inspection	11/02/2022
monitor staff practice more precisely to ensure the curriculum is implemented as effectively as possible, in order to build children's knowledge and skills even further.	11/02/2022

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

- develop staff practice, to ensure that they use every learning opportunity to promote children's language and communication skills to the highest level
- monitor noise levels in the room to better support children's listening and concentration skills.

Setting details

Unique reference number	127449
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10108464
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Day care type	Sessional day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	2 to 4
Total number of places	26
Number of children on roll	52
Name of registered person	Southborough Pre-School Committee
Registered person unique reference number	RP904801
Telephone number	01892 538666
Date of previous inspection	23 March 2015

Information about this early years setting

Southborough Pre-school is committee-run and registered in 1991. It operates from the community centre in Southborough, near Tunbridge Wells, Kent. The pre-school is open from 9am to 3pm, five days a week, during term time only. It receives funding to provide free early years education for children aged two, three and four years. Eight members of staff work with the children, six of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3. The manager holds a level 3 childcare qualification.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Alison Martin

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the pre-school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the pre-school and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the pre-school.
- The inspector observed the quality of education being provided, inside and outdoors, and assessed the impact this was having on children's learning.
- The manager joined the inspector on a learning walk and talked to the inspector about the curriculum and what they want children to learn.
- The inspector carried out joint observations of group activities with the manager.
- The inspector spoke with the registered person, staff, children and parents at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The inspector looked at relevant documentation and reviewed evidence of the suitability of staff working in the pre-school.

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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