

Inspection of St Nicholas Preschool

St Nicholas Church Hall, Morton Road, LOWESTOFT, Suffolk NR33 0JQ

Inspection date: 22 March 2022

Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
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The quality of education	Inadequate
Behaviour and attitudes	Inadequate
Personal development	Inadequate
Leadership and management	Inadequate
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is inadequate

The provider has a poor understanding of the early years foundation stage requirements. This places children at risk of harm. Staff do not give children clear and consistent rules and boundaries to help them understand what is expected from them. The rules about which children can access resources and when are unclear, as staff apply these rules unfairly and inconsistently. This has a detrimental effect on children's emotional and physical well-being.

Children generally have a sufficient range of toys and resources to play with at the pre-school. However, some children's ability to choose and move around freely is curtailed. Staff tell children loudly to choose whether they want to be indoors or outside, while other children are allowed to move freely between the areas.

Children develop some social skills as they play with their friends. They enjoy playing together with mud and water in the mud kitchen area. Children engage in sticking and gluing to make cards for Mother's Day with a member of staff. They join in role play with their peers.

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

- The provider does not ensure that legal requirements are consistently met. The provider has identified a need to make significant changes to improve the quality of the provision and the overall management of the pre-school. However, these changes have not been implemented effectively. The appointment of an additional manager has led to some improvements. However, serious weaknesses in the provision remain.
- The provider does not remove risks to ensure children are kept safe outdoors. They took action to prevent children from climbing over a low garden fence, following a security incident. However, the provider has not maintained these safety measures to prevent further incidents.
- Staff do not benefit from strong, effective leadership. The provider has put strategies in place to raise the quality of provision, which include supervision meetings, staff training and the sharing of the pre-school's policies. However, the provider does not guide or support staff effectively to improve the quality of care and teaching overall.
- The provider does not check that all staff understand their roles and responsibilities. Some leaders model poor practice when working with the children. For example, they raise their voice to shout across the room and lack warmth and understanding towards some children. Staff do not support children appropriately to develop skills in regulating their own behaviour. At times, staff physically intervene to remove children from the activities that they choose to do, without warning, explanation or consent from the children.

- The provider does not ensure that children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are appropriately supported. Individual planning for these children is unclear and identified strategies are inconsistently implemented. Staff work to involve parents and other agencies. However, not enough is done to ensure children with SEND make the progress that they are capable of. As a result, they are put at further disadvantage.
- Children do not receive the level of education to which they are entitled. The provider has failed to recognise children's individual learning needs and, therefore, cannot build on what children already know or what they need to learn next. While children gain some independence, staff do not bridge the gap in their learning effectively. Children do not develop the knowledge and skills they need to be ready for school.
- Children do not receive enough positive and meaningful interactions to enhance their knowledge or help them develop their communication skills. Staff do not provide a language-rich environment so that children benefit from effective back-and-forth interactions that help lay firm foundations for their language and cognitive development. However, staff do share stories and songs with children. They sometimes talk to them about what they are doing.
- Staff encourage children to develop some self-care skills. For example, children wash their hands and staff work with parents to help toilet train their child. Children clear away their own plates and cups at snack time.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

Children's safety is compromised. The provider does not protect children and fails to recognise signs that a child may be experiencing physical or emotional harm. Where any concerns arise, the provider fails to ensure that staff understand the importance of keeping appropriate records. All adults with responsibility to safeguard children fail to take appropriate action to do so. The provider's safeguarding policy is not in line with the local safeguarding partnership guidance and fails to follow the correct procedures. The provider does not follow robust recruitment procedures and vetting records are poorly maintained. Staff do not understand what they must do if they have concerns about the practice or suitability of adults who work with the children.

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
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implement a suitable safeguarding policy which is in line with the policy and procedures from the local safeguarding partnership, including clear information about the action to be taken where there are concerns about an adult working with children	06/06/2022
ensure that all staff are trained to understand the safeguarding policy and procedures they must follow if they have concerns about the safety or well-being of a child or the suitability of an adult working with them	06/06/2022
ensure that a clear risk assessment is in place and implemented to prevent children leaving the premises unaccompanied by appropriate adults	06/06/2022
ensure that children's behaviour is managed appropriately	06/06/2022
ensure that physical intervention is only used to avert immediate danger or injury to any person or to manage a child's behaviour where absolutely necessary	06/06/2022
ensure that a record is kept of any occasion where physical intervention is used for a child and the child's parents are informed	06/06/2022
deliver clear and appropriate support arrangements for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities	06/06/2022
maintain appropriate records for the safe and efficient running of the setting to ensure that children's individual needs are met, ensuring that all appropriate records are readily and easily accessible for inspection	06/06/2022
improve the quality of staff training and support to help them improve the quality of their teaching and deliver high-quality interactions with children	06/06/2022

ensure that staff gain and demonstrate appropriate skills and knowledge, particularly with regard to teaching and how to deliver good-quality learning experiences for children.	06/06/2022
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To meet the requirements of the early years foundation stage, the provider must:

	Due date
ensure that children have rich opportunities to develop their communication and language skills so that the development of their spoken language firmly underpins all seven areas of learning	06/06/2022
ensure that children receive effective support for their personal, social and emotional development to help them learn ways to manage their own feelings and behaviour, and to treat others with respect and kindness.	06/06/2022

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY371259
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	10232215
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	2 to 4
Total number of places	34
Number of children on roll	46
Name of registered person	T & M Cotter LLP
Registered person unique reference number	RP905652
Telephone number	07528714535
Date of previous inspection	4 October 2019

Information about this early years setting

St Nicholas Preschool registered in 2008. The pre-school employs six members of childcare staff. Of these, five hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 or above, including one at level 6. The pre-school opens Monday to Friday, from 9am until 3.30pm, during term time only. It provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Kate Hipperson

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the setting 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 setting.
- We carried out this inspection as a result of a risk assessment, following information we received about the provider.
- The inspector observed the quality of interactions between staff and children and evaluated the impact that these had on children's learning and development.
- The inspector carried out a learning walk with the manager, who is also the nominated individual.
- First-aid training certificates were viewed. The inspector looked at evidence of the suitability of staff members.
- The inspector held joint discussions with the manager and provider.
- The inspector spoke with staff and children at appropriate times during the inspection. The inspector evaluated the experiences of children.
- The inspector spoke with parents and considered their views about the setting.
- The manager carried out a joint observation of a learning activity with the inspector.

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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