

Inspection of Hillside Playcare

United Reformed Church, The Street, Little Waltham, Chelmsford, Essex CM3 3NT

Inspection date: 21 March 2022

Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
The quality of education	Inadequate
Behaviour and attitudes	Inadequate
Personal development	Inadequate
Leadership and management	Inadequate
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not applicable

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is inadequate

Children's safety and welfare are compromised due to significant weaknesses in leadership and management. This is because of issues that the provider has failed to identify or make safe, such as hot radiators. In addition, children can access unsuitable areas of the premises, such as the kitchen, storage areas and the main door of the premises. A lack of consistent supervision results in children taking part in risky behaviour, such as climbing unstable resources, including an A-frame, which children balance on without staff noticing until a child nearly falls off. The provider and her staff do not recognise or understand their individual and collective responsibility to keep children safe and healthy.

The provider and staff do not support young children's understanding about the consequences of their actions, such as balancing on resources, or when playing in cold water. Some children are inappropriately dressed for outdoor water play. Staff do not explain the importance of wearing appropriate clothing when they play outside. When children come in for snack, they tell staff that they do not want to take off their coat because they are 'freezing'. Staff ask very young children 'are you hot or cold?' rather than ensuring that they are warmed up after playing outdoors, or helping children to understand why they might be cold.

Children develop close relationships with staff. They are happy and confident as they arrive at the setting and say goodbye to parents and carers. Children are supported to develop their communication and language skills. For example, the staff correct the children's pronunciation by repeating words back to them.

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

- The provider and her staff team show a poor knowledge and understanding about their responsibility to promote the health and safety of children. They do not carry out effective checks to ensure that the premises and equipment remain safe. Although risk assessments are in place, they are ineffective. They do not confirm that all resources, such as low-level mirrors, have been considered to ensure they do not pose a risk to children's safety. This does not ensure the safe management of the setting and puts children at risk of harm.
- Systems for reviewing accidents are ineffective. This is because the provider does not recognise or act when repeat accidents happen. One example of this is where children have had accidents when playing with large wooden blocks. As a result, children's health and safety is compromised.
- The provider does not have effective systems in place for supervising staff. Therefore, underperformance is not identified, in order to raise teaching skills and improve practice. The provider and her staff do not understand their responsibility to promote children's safety and well-being.

- Staff carry out regular observations and assessments of children. However, planning does not always take account of their individual needs and abilities. This means that children are not sufficiently challenged to make good progress in learning from their starting points. Children are not supported to understand the impact of their risky play. The staff have unrealistic expectations of the children, as they expect them to be responsible for the risks that they take.
- Overall, children are well behaved. They have a positive attitude when building relationships. Children share and make confident decisions when interacting with others.
- Parents say that staff find out what their children like to play with as part of helping to settle them in. Parents talk about how they like the online communication system. They also explain how staff have helped them to put some strategies in place to support children with additional needs.
- Children are encouraged to wash their hands before eating. They enjoy fresh fruit at snack time and are supported to cut apples using a plastic knife. Staff engage children in conversation about the name of each type of apple and differences between how they look and taste. Children have easy access to fresh drinking water throughout the session.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

The provider does not safeguard children. In addition to staff's poor supervision during activities, children can easily reach and open the main door. This leads out to the car park and road. As a result, children's safety is compromised.

The provider and staff show an understanding of the key indicators of child abuse. Staff are aware of what to do if a child protection concern is raised. They know about the role of outside agencies, such as the local authority designated officer if an allegation is made against a member of staff. Four members of staff have completed relevant paediatric first-aid training.

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 all necessary steps to ensure the safety of children at all times	18/04/2022
put in place effective risk assessments and take action to minimise or remove hazards that expose children to unnecessary risks	18/04/2022

ensure that all staff working with children have appropriate training, skills and knowledge and a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities	18/04/2022
manage children's behaviour appropriately to ensure their safety and promote their understanding of how to keep themselves safe	18/04/2022
ensure that all staff working with children receive effective supervision that monitors personal effectiveness, identifies ongoing training needs and tackles underperformance.	18/04/2022

Setting details

Unique reference number	2516011
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10191641
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register
Day care type	Sessional day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	2 to 4
Total number of places	23
Number of children on roll	32
Name of registered person	Talbot, Maxine Louise
Registered person unique reference number	RP906777
Telephone number	07792838328
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

Hillside Playcare registered in 2019 and is situated in a village church hall. The setting employs five members of childcare staff including the provider/manager, three of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 or above. The provider/manager holds qualified teacher status. The setting opens Monday, Tuesday, and Friday from 8.30am to 3.30pm, and Wednesday from 8.30am to 1pm, during term time only. The setting provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Julia Maynard

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 this into account in their evaluation of the setting.
- The provider and the inspector completed a learning walk of the setting with the provider.
- Children spoke to the inspector about what they enjoy doing in the setting.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation of an activity with the provider, which they evaluated.
- The inspector reviewed relevant documentation, including the suitability checks of all adults working in the setting.
- Parents and staff spoke with the inspector at appropriate times during the inspection.
- The inspector viewed the activities offered both indoors and outside.

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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