

Inspection of Conkers The Balsam Centre's Community Nursery

Wincanton Community Venture, The Balsam Centre, Balsam Park, Wincanton,
Somerset BA9 9HB

Inspection date: 24 May 2022

Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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

Weaknesses in leadership and management significantly compromise children's welfare. The management team does not ensure that all safeguarding concerns arising are dealt with in a timely manner to help keep children safe.

Nevertheless, children are happy and settled. They play cooperatively with other children and form strong friendships. Children excitedly greet a friend on arrival and smile happily as they go to play. Staff have high expectations for children's learning. They provide a broad curriculum that supports children to make good progress, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Children begin to use language very well to describe their thoughts. For example, they see a helicopter flying overhead and talk with staff about where it might be flying. They say, 'We can see the helicopter, but not the pilot.' Children develop their early mathematical awareness well. They like exploring numbers in their play and begin to name written numerals. They recognise numbers of personal significance and tell a visitor, 'I'm three.' Children develop their understanding of the world and their imaginations effectively in play. For example, when playing outdoors they run to shelter from a sudden hailstorm and watch with wonder as the rain creates big puddles in the garden. After the rain stops, children explore the puddles with interest, fetching their toy ducks to float in the water. They show staff and proudly say, 'We have made a duck pond.'

During the COVID-19 pandemic, staff kept in contact with children and their families to offer support and activities to do at home. Staff recognise how the pandemic has had an impact on children's social skills. They support children well to gain confidence and develop friendships within their play.

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

- The management team does not monitor all possible safeguarding concerns adequately to ensure these are acted on in accordance with local procedures. The management team does not ensure that staff record full details of any concerns and recognise when these should be referred to the relevant safeguarding authorities. This has a significant impact on children's safety.
- Staff are kind and caring. Children engage well with the friendly, reassuring approach staff give. Older children are keen to tell staff about their play. Babies stretch out their arms to staff to be picked up and settle easily for a sleep when tired.
- Staff have improved the outdoor play areas effectively to motivate children's learning through their exploration and investigation. Children like to relax in a comfortable, cushioned tent to look at their favourite books. Babies enjoy sitting outdoors and stretch out to feel the grass. They learn how things work and smile

at the noise they make when shaking a maraca. Older children enthusiastically wave a bubble wand in the air and create giant bubbles. They carefully carry these across the garden to show their friends.

- Children learn well through sensory play activities. They have fun exploring different textures. Babies eagerly push their hands through the 'gloop' mixture and watch with fascination as this drips from their fingers. Older children like to dig and scoop in the sandpit outdoors. They tell a visitor that the 'rain has made the sand into concrete'.
- Staff encourage children's language skills effectively through enjoyable activities. For example, they introduce new vocabulary, using toys to emphasise positional language. Children concentrate well as they follow staff's actions and confidently put the toys on top of their head, under their foot and behind their back.
- Children enjoying playing outdoors and benefit from frequent physical play activities. They begin to solve practical problems with their friends and work out how to swing safely on the monkey bars of the climbing frame. Older children enthusiastically kick a football into the net and show excitement at scoring a goal. Younger babies begin to pull themselves to standing and smile happily at their achievement.
- Staff provide purposeful activities based on children's interests and which help to develop their general life skills. For example, children like making vegetable soup. They go with staff to buy the ingredients from a local shop and help with chopping up the vegetables. Staff support children to grow their own vegetables, such as carrots and beans, which they can then eat.
- Children behave well. Staff support them to recognise expected boundaries, for example to stop and listen when hearing a member of staff shake a tambourine to alert them of changes to activities. Older children show kindness to their younger friends. They run outdoors in the rain to fetch a friend's hat that has been left there.
- Parents speak highly of staff and say they are very supportive of their children and family. Parents comment that staff keep them well informed about their children's activities and provide ideas for them to do at home to support their children's development.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

The management team has failed to notify the relevant agencies promptly of safeguarding concerns. Staff complete safeguarding training and are aware of the basic signs and symptoms that may indicate potential concerns. However, the management team does not ensure that all safeguarding concerns are recorded accurately and monitored to confirm staff have taken appropriate action to help keep children safe. In addition, not all staff are clear about the safeguarding agencies that they need to refer any concerns to. Staff continue to risk assess the premises to help minimise accidents. For example, they have gates fitted across the office and kitchen area to prevent children's unsupervised access.

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
improve the arrangements for monitoring safeguarding issues to ensure appropriate action is taken at all times	21/06/2022
improve staff's understanding of how to implement all aspects of safeguarding procedures, with particular regard to the recording of any concerns and recognising when to refer these to the relevant safeguarding authorities.	21/06/2022

Setting details

Unique reference number	2552082
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	10215759
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	0 to 4
Total number of places	32
Number of children on roll	65
Name of registered person	Wincanton Community Venture
Registered person unique reference number	RP534730
Telephone number	01963 31842
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

Conkers The Balsam Centre's Community Nursery re-registered in 2019. It was previously registered at different premises in 2015. The nursery operates from rooms in the Balsam Centre, Wincanton, Somerset. The nursery is open Monday to Friday, from 8am until 5.30pm, all year round. There are 11 staff employed. The manager holds a childcare qualification at level 5 and eight staff hold childcare qualifications at level 3. The nursery is in receipt of funding to provide early years education for children aged two, three and four years.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Mary Daniel

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 manager took the inspector on a tour of the setting and explained how the curriculum is delivered.
- The inspector and the manager completed a joint observation and discussed the quality of teaching.
- The inspector observed children's interactions in play, indoors and outdoors, and discussed their learning and development with staff.
- The inspector took into account the spoken views of parents.
- The inspector viewed a sample of documents, including qualifications and first-aid certificates.
- The inspector met with the management team and had discussions about the provision they offer.

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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