

Inspection of Sunflower Montessori Nursery School

Causeway Farm, Middleton, Saxmundham, Suffolk IP17 3NH

Inspection date:

7 June 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Overall effectiveness at previous
inspection

Good

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision requires improvement

Children generally settle well as they choose resources and activities in the accessible indoor and outdoor learning environments. However, the nursery is not consistently well led. The quality of teaching and learning for the children is variable. That said, children count, sort and sequence items. They practise pre-writing skills as they handle crayons and paint freely. Children learn to use scissors safely. They learn how to catch and then throw a ball into a target. Children work cooperatively as they build with giant bricks and problem-solve as they decide how to manoeuvre a number of full-size tyres across the ground.

Overall, staff model behaviour well. They take the time to explain expectations and consequences of actions with the children. Children are supportive of each other, helping their friends out when they have difficulty putting on their shoes. However, on occasions, particularly during large-group play, children's behaviour becomes very boisterous. At these times, staff do not manage the situation effectively. They resort to raising their voices in order to regain children's attention. In addition, group story times are not delivered well. Staff do not successfully capture or sustain children's interest and, as a result, children's learning is interrupted.

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

- The nursery owner, who is also the manager, leads on the planning and delivery of the curriculum. However, the manager is only present in the nursery for two days a week. She spends the remaining three days at her second nursery. There is no competent, qualified deputy to take charge and lead the nursery in her absence. New staff have not been fully inducted to ensure that they understand their roles and responsibilities.
- Staff ensure children are always well supervised. However, insufficient attention is given to identifying and reducing risks in the learning environment. For example, the front gate to the nursery is not adequately secured to prevent unauthorised persons from entering the premises. In addition, risks posed by a stair gate, a children's slide and a sofa, which are all either damaged or worn, have not been dealt with effectively.
- Children, many of whom are moving on to school shortly, show that they are independent as they take an active part in the daily routines. They take themselves to the toilet and know how to wash their hands. They pour their own drinks and know how to fill up their water jug when it becomes empty.
- Staff skilfully model learning with younger or newer children. They demonstrate and explain how to use resources and where to put them away once they have finished. Children learn to care for their environment and living things. They plant and grow vegetables in the greenhouse. Children confidently stroke the pet rabbits and know that eggs are laid by the resident chickens.

- All children, including those who speak English as an additional language or those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, benefit from a language-rich environment. Staff talk easily with the children, correctly repeating words that children may mispronounce. Staff introduce many new words and consistently use good-quality conversations. They pose challenging questions and give children time to think. For example, during an activity, children recognise and confidently name a large number of wild animals. Staff skilfully extend children's learning by referring to a picture map and helping children to recall which continent the different animals originate from.
- Observations and assessments of what children can do are used effectively. Gaps in children's development are swiftly identified. Information about children's progress is shared with parents. However, recent staff changes mean that several children have not been assigned a key person to help ensure that every child's learning is tailored to meet their individual needs. Despite this, parents are positive about the nursery. Several travel distances for their children to attend. Parents comment favourably on the wide range of knowledge, language and skills that their children have acquired during their time at the nursery.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Safeguarding arrangements have recently been reviewed and revised. The manager is the designated person to take the lead on safeguarding and there are satisfactory back-up arrangements in place for when she is not present. Staff have a secure knowledge of the possible signs and symptoms of abuse. They complete mandatory child protection training. Safeguarding policies are in place and provide guidance on the procedures to follow should there be a need to report concerns about children's welfare. Safe recruitment procedures are followed when appointing staff. There are clear procedures to deal with accidents and these are followed.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

	Due date
ensure that there is a named deputy, who is capable and appropriately qualified, to take charge of the setting in the manager's absence	01/07/2022

ensure that all staff receive an appropriate induction to help them to understand their roles and responsibilities. Induction training must include information about child protection and health and safety issues.	01/07/2022
take all reasonable steps to ensure children are not exposed to risks and that there are appropriate systems in place to support staff to address or minimise such risks	01/07/2022
ensure that each child is assigned a key person whose role is to help ensure every child's care is tailored to meet their individual needs, offering a settled relationship for the child and building a relationship with their parents.	01/07/2022

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

- support all staff to raise the quality of teaching to a higher level, particularly during large-group activities, ensuring that expectations for children's behaviour are commonly understood and applied consistently and learning opportunities remain rich and are not lost.

Setting details

Unique reference number	260949
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	10237963
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	2 to 5
Total number of places	22
Number of children on roll	30
Name of registered person	Smith, Lucy Victoria
Registered person unique reference number	RP512581
Telephone number	01728 648352
Date of previous inspection	10 January 2020

Information about this early years setting

Sunflower Montessori Nursery School registered in 1991. The setting employs five members of childcare staff. Of these, four hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3, including two with early years professional status. The setting opens Monday to Friday, from 8.30am until 4pm, during term time only. It provides funded early education for three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Dawn Pointer

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.
- We carried out this inspection as a result of a risk assessment, following information we received about the provider.
- The inspector viewed the premises, inside and outside, and established how the provider keeps children safe.
- The inspector observed the staff interacting with the children and assessed the impact this has on children's learning.
- The inspector spoke with all staff at appropriate times during the inspection.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation of an activity.
- The inspector sampled a range of documents, which included information gathered about children, accident records and evidence of suitability and qualifications of staff working with the children.
- The inspector spoke with a number of parents during the inspection and took account of their views.

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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