

Inspection of Sunflower Sherards

Ployters Road, Harlow, Essex CM18 7PS

Inspection date: 22 November 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good
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What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children are happy to attend this setting and display a positive attitude to learning. They form very strong relationships with the staff, who, in turn, support children's emotional well-being, self-esteem and resilience. Children are very familiar with the established routines. Children navigate with interest and ease around the setting, choosing activities that spark their curiosity and excitement. For example, they enjoy pretending to be doctors and patients in the home corner. Children use their previous experiences to engage in role play with their peers, which helps them to strengthen their social interactions. In addition, children confidently demonstrate the 'recovery position' while learning to take turns.

Children enjoy carrying out small responsibilities around the setting. This includes helping the staff set up the tables ready for snack and distributing their peers' drinks. Children wear 'pre-school helpers' badges with pride. This helps to boost their self-esteem and confidence. Staff support children's literacy skills through exciting activities. For example, when out in the garden, children use chalk to copy and form recognisable letters on the blackboard. Furthermore, children are able to identify the first sound from their name. Children enjoy exploring play dough to further develop their fine motor skills. They concentrate intently to roll and squash the play dough into preferred shapes.

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

- Staff offer a rich environment with plenty of meaningful learning opportunities. Children make their own choices on what activities they would like to explore next. They learn to share and take turns with ease and confidence. For example, in the garden, children play well together with dinosaurs, giggling and laughing with excitement.
- Staff model language well and engage in conversations with the children. They use open-ended questions and introduce new vocabulary, such as 'bandage', 'ambulance' and 'temperature'. However, staff do not use all opportunities to encourage younger children to repeat these words to embed their knowledge.
- Children have good opportunities to be active and engage in physical activities. For example, in the garden, children follow staff's instructions to jump and squat, to keep their bodies warm. Furthermore, children enjoy exploring mark-making tools and materials to further develop their fine motor skills. Staff engage in discussions with the children about the shapes and colours used, to support their mathematical skills.
- Children have opportunities to explore exciting heavy-duty plastic trays set up with 'winter landscapes' and natural resources. These are supported by relevant stories, such as the story about a stick man. However, staff do not always encourage the children to explore this further and challenge their learning.

- Children form strong relationships with the staff, who offer a calm, stable and nurturing environment. They feel secure in their care and readily ask for help when needed. This supports children's emotional well-being effectively. Staff have good knowledge and understanding of children's learning. They understand what children need to learn next and use information from their observations of children to guide their planning. However, occasionally, staff do not identify when children need more challenge to extend their learning further.
- Leaders' vision and ethos for the setting are ambitious. They continuously look for ways to improve the quality of care and education they provide to benefit the children. This includes working in close partnership with outside professionals. They are inclusive and value their team's well-being and professional growth. Leaders organise regular meetings to nurture and mentor the staff, while including the whole team in developing an effective curriculum for children at the setting.
- Partnerships with parents are effective. Parents comment on how inclusive and supportive leaders and staff are. For example, parents praise how well staff support children's emotional well-being and how effective the overall communication is.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff and leaders have good knowledge and understanding of safeguarding, including wider aspects such as female genital mutilation. They have effective and accurate policies and procedures in place to guide them, which they review regularly and share with parents. Staff and leaders understand the importance of following the correct procedures to report any concerns to relevant professionals to protect children from harm. Staff and leaders complete regular training to keep their safeguarding knowledge current and up to date. Staff take steps to help ensure that the setting and garden are safe. They carry out regular risk assessments. This helps to assure children's safety and welfare.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- find ways to engage children more effectively in challenging conversations and introduce new vocabulary, particularly to younger children, to develop communication and language to a higher level
- strengthen the quality of teaching to provide further challenge that extends children's learning.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY420549
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10235494
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	24
Number of children on roll	21
Name of registered person	Great Parndon Community Association
Registered person unique reference number	RP910034
Telephone number	01279 291 399
Date of previous inspection	9 February 2017

Information about this early years setting

Sunflower Sherards registered in 2010. The pre-school employs three members of childcare staff. Of these, two hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3. One member of staff holds a level 6 foundation degree. The pre-school opens from Monday to Friday, during term time. Sessions are from 8.45am until 11.45am and from 12.05pm until 3.05pm. The pre-school provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Anca Sandu

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 provider and the inspector completed a learning walk together. They discussed how the curriculum is organised and what they want children to learn.
- The inspector observed the quality of teaching and education, outdoors and indoors, and assessed the impact this has on children's learning.
- The inspector spoke with the staff at appropriate times throughout the inspection.
- Children spoke with the inspector about the activities they were doing.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation with the manager.
- The inspector held a meeting with the manager. She looked at relevant documentation and reviewed evidence of the suitability of the staff working at the setting.
- Parents spoke about the setting to the inspector, who 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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