

Inspection of Saffron Walden Nursery School

Saffron Walden Nursery School, Shire Hill Industrial Estate, Saffron Walden, Essex
CB11 3AQ

Inspection date: 17 November 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

Children's safety and welfare are put at risk due to weaknesses in leadership and management. The provider has failed to ensure they meet all the legal requirements of their registration. They have not informed Ofsted about significant changes to the leadership and management of the nursery. Ofsted has not received the relevant information about committee members, so that suitability checks can be carried out. There are inconsistencies in safeguarding knowledge across the staff team. In addition, the provider's recruitment procedures are not robust. They have not ensured that all staff are suitable to work with children.

Children do not benefit from meaningful learning opportunities. This is because managers do not have good enough knowledge of planning an effective curriculum to focus on children's development needs. As a result, children do not have the opportunity to make the progress they are capable of. Despite the inadequate planning of activities, children have fun and enjoy their time at the nursery. For example, babies enjoy sensory activities, such as investigating bubbles in soapy water. Older children engage in craft activities, such as hand printing, to create spider pictures. Children develop close relationships with the kind and caring staff. Children benefit from a welcoming environment.

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

- The provider has not supported the managers to undertake appropriate training and professional development opportunities. As a result, managers lack the skills, knowledge and understanding to fulfil their roles effectively.
- Managers understand the need to carry out safer recruitment checks, including obtaining a Disclosure and Barring Service check. However, this has not been completed for staff that leave and return to work at the nursery. This means that their suitability cannot be assured.
- The provider has failed to notify Ofsted of changes to members of the committee, so that Ofsted can carry out suitability checks. Therefore, some active committee members have not been vetted to ensure they are suitable for their role.
- The provider has not notified Ofsted of changes to those with oversight and management of the provision, including the nominated individual.
- Managers do not demonstrate good knowledge of the curriculum or what they want children to learn. They are not able to give a clear overview of how they plan a purposeful curriculum with a clear intent for children's learning. As a result, children do not develop knowledge and skills in readiness for school.
- Children's learning is organised around themes across the whole nursery. Staff place more emphasis on activities, rather than what they want children to learn. As a result, children do not benefit from incisively planned and sequenced

learning that supports their individual needs.

- The induction process is weak. The provider and managers do not ensure that staff read and understand the policies and procedures before working with children. For example, some staff do not know the fire evacuation procedure. This compromises staff's safety and the safety and well-being of children.
- Arrangements for staff supervisions are weak. The provider does not ensure that managers and staff are provided with coaching and support to help identify and address weaknesses in practice and improve their personal effectiveness.
- Parents say that they are happy with the care their child receives at the nursery and staff share information about their child's experiences through verbal feedback and electronic communication. However, some parents do not know their child's next steps in learning and say that staff do not share this information with them regularly. This does not support a consistent approach to help children to make the best possible progress.
- Children enjoy playing outside in the well-resourced outside area. They have access to a variety of activities, such as large sandpits, mud kitchens and a water wall. A designated den allows children to enjoy looking at books or engaging in quieter play outside. The canopied roof area means that children can play outside all year round.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

The provider has not ensured that all those working with children are suitable to do so. They have not followed the procedure to allow Ofsted to complete suitability checks on all committee members. This means that children's welfare is not assured. Although staff are aware of the possible signs of abuse, some staff lack knowledge of other essential safeguarding requirements. Some staff do not know how to respond appropriately to any potential concerns they may have about children or the conduct of another member of staff. Not all staff can confidently talk about safeguarding issues, such as how they would identify and respond if a child was at risk of radicalisation. Staff carry out daily checks and risk assessments to ensure that the premises remain safe and secure.

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
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take action to ensure all staff have up-to-date knowledge of safeguarding issues and know how to respond to any concerns they may have about a child or colleague's behaviour	15/12/2022
provide effective support, coaching and training to all staff to ensure they have the knowledge, skills and understanding to fulfil their roles effectively; this relates particularly to the management team	15/12/2022
improve recruitment procedures to ensure that all those working with children are suitable to do so	15/12/2022
ensure Ofsted is supplied with the necessary information to be able to carry out suitability checks on all committee members	15/12/2022
plan and implement a purposeful curriculum that supports children's learning needs and targets what they need to learn next to make good progress in readiness for future learning	15/12/2022
improve induction procedures to ensure that all staff fully understand the policies and procedures, including the fire evacuation procedures	15/12/2022
implement a programme of supervision for all staff, to monitor their practice and support their professional development	15/12/2022
ensure that parents are kept up to date with their child's next steps in learning and understand how they can support learning at home.	15/12/2022

Setting details

Unique reference number	650123
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10234595
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	1 to 4
Total number of places	49
Number of children on roll	68
Name of registered person	Saffron Walden Nursery School Committee
Registered person unique reference number	RP901952
Telephone number	01799522108
Date of previous inspection	30 January 2017

Information about this early years setting

Saffron Walden Nursery School registered in 1993. The nursery employs 21 members of childcare staff, 12 of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 or above. The nursery opens Monday to Friday during school term times. Sessions are from 8am to 4pm. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector
Marisa White

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 managers joined the inspector on a learning walk and talked to the inspector about their curriculum and what they want their children to learn.
- The inspector talked to staff at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The inspector observed the quality of education being provided, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact that this was having on children's learning.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation of a group activity with one of the managers.
- Parents shared their views of the setting with the inspector.
- The inspector looked at relevant documentation and reviewed evidence of the suitability of staff working in the nursery.

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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