

Inspection of Earlystarts Childcare

Charlton House Independant School, 57 Midanbury Lane, Southampton SO18 4DJ

Inspection date: 17 February 2023

| 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

Although children feel safe, their safety and welfare are compromised due to weaknesses relating to the safety and the security of the premises. Overall, children enjoy attending the nursery and they form positive attachments with staff. Most children feel confident to approach staff for reassurance when needed. For example, babies enjoy plenty of cuddles and reassurance and are cared for by warm responsive staff.

Staff know the children well and understand what they want them to learn, sequencing this well over time. They use additional funding well, such as buying books to promote children's language and literacy development. Pre-school children make choices and decisions about their play. They choose their activities and where they play. This helps children to feel important and value their decisions. On the day of the inspection, children had fun engaging in imaginative play with a cardboard box with their friends. They worked together and used their communication skills as they shared ideas together. Mostly the learning environment is organised well to support children to engage effectively in their learning and play.

Children develop their self-care skills and independence from a young age. Young toddlers learn to use the 'snuffle station' to clean their noses with staff's support. Children learn about their emotions and feelings, including through books and activities. These help children understand their feelings, such as when using pictures to identify if they feel happy, cross or sad.

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

- Children's safety is put at risk as staff are not always fully vigilant or demonstrate they recognise and respond to potential dangers promptly. They fail to consistently risk assess all equipment used, which then poses a potential danger to children. On the day of the inspection, temporary large plastic barriers were observed to fall down. Staff did not respond promptly to this or when children then pushed the barriers down, putting themselves and others at risk of harm.
- The premises are not consistently kept secure. A door to one of the nursery buildings was left unlocked while children were inside, allowing potential access by unauthorised individuals. Furthermore, staff do not recognise the risks of large groups of older children mixing with younger children while outside. This puts children at risk of accidents and injuries.
- Staff identify and plan well for children's next steps in learning. The manager and staff monitor children's progress regularly to check they are making good progress. Staff promote children's language development securely. For example,

they use Makaton alongside words with babies to promote their speech and understanding. Young toddlers communicate their choices, such as selecting picture cards to choose a book to read. On occasion, not all staff fully recognise that some new children need extra support. This does not always enable these children to become effectively engaged in some activities.

- Children enjoy a broad variety of activities to support their learning. Younger children gain confidence when exploring different sensory materials, such as sand and water. Children develop their small physical skills well. For example, older children use different tools, including tweezers and brushes, during dough and sticking activities. At times, pre-school children do not consistently play in a calm environment. Some staff do not respond to rising noise levels to provide a calmer learning atmosphere.
- Children's behaviour is mostly good. Older children are familiar with the behaviour expectations. Staff work with children who need more support to be kind, share and take turns. Pre-school children enjoy helping with tasks, such as tidying up and preparing for mealtimes. This helps children develop a sense of responsibility. Staff praise children regularly, which helps to build their confidence and self-esteem.
- Staff and parents regularly exchange information. This helps staff to stay updated with children's likes, dislikes, interests and family background. Parents say they feel comfortable to raise concerns with the management team. They also report they are happy with their child's progress and value the information they receive from staff in person and via a secure app.
- The manager has good relationships with staff and supports their well-being sensitively. Staff complete relevant training, including paediatric first aid and child protection training, and they have access to an online training system. The manager lacks the required qualification for her role, although is currently undertaking training for this. She has previously tried to fully complete this training. However, the full completion of it was affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

Breaches of requirements compromise children's safety and well-being. Staff sometimes lack awareness of potential risks and hazards to children. At times, they fail to risk assess some equipment or supervise children adequately. Furthermore, they do not always respond promptly when safety issues arise. Despite these weaknesses, staff have a good understanding of child protection. They know what to look out for and who to contact should concerns about children or other staff arise. The management team have robust recruitment processes in place to check staff's suitability to work with children.

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 |
|--|-----------------|
| complete thorough risk assessments of the outside play area, particularly in the ages and numbers of children mixing together and any temporary equipment being used, to ensure children's safety at all times | 03/03/2023 |
| ensure all areas of the premises are secure to prevent any unauthorised entry, to promote children's safety and well-being | 03/03/2023 |
| ensure the manager completes a full and relevant level 3 qualification for her role, to meet requirements. | 30/06/2023 |

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

- provide more consistent support to children who need extra help to engage with activities, to further meet their individual needs
- review the noise levels in the pre-school room and take steps to support children to play and learn in a more consistently calm environment.

Setting details

| | |
|--|---|
| Unique reference number | 2616705 |
| Local authority | Southampton |
| Inspection number | 10264051 |
| 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 | 0 to 4 |
| Total number of places | 62 |
| Number of children on roll | 91 |
| Name of registered person | Hammond, Claire |
| Registered person unique reference number | 2616707 |
| Telephone number | 07500896063 |
| Date of previous inspection | Not applicable |

Information about this early years setting

Earlystarts Childcare registered in 2020. It operates from premises within the Charlton House Independent School. The nursery is open Monday to Friday from 7am to 7pm for 51 weeks of the year, closing for a week at Christmas. The nursery receives funding to provide free early years education to children aged two, three and four. There are 16 staff employed to work with the children. Of these, nine staff hold a level 3 qualification and six staff hold level 2 qualifications.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Lucy Short

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 this into account in their evaluation of the nursery.
- The inspector and manager completed a learning walk throughout the setting and discussed the early years curriculum and what they want their children to learn.
- The inspector observed children's activities in each room and their interactions with staff and each other and evaluated the impact of these on their learning and development.
- A joint observation took place with the manager and the quality of the teaching and impact on children's learning was evaluated afterwards.
- The inspector held discussions with the management team and reviewed the recruitment process and the organisation of the nursery.
- Discussions were held with staff at appropriate times during the inspection. This included checking their understanding of child protection.
- The inspector spoke to several parents to seek their views about the nursery and took these into account.
- Children spoke to the inspector during the inspection and talked to her about their play and activities.

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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