

Inspection of Hilltop Nursery

Brighton General Hospital, Elm Grove, Brighton BN2 3EW

Inspection date: 9 March 2023

Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
The quality of education	Inadequate
Behaviour and attitudes	Inadequate
Personal development	Inadequate
Leadership and management	Inadequate
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is inadequate

Children's safety and well-being at this nursery are compromised due to breaches of safeguarding requirements. Staff do not recognise that children who walk around or play while eating food are at risk of choking. Staff do not effectively support children who struggle to manage their own behaviour and feelings. This has a negative impact on those children who behave well. For instance, staff often fail to respond when some children throw and kick toys out of the way, tease others or stamp on worms that they have found in the garden. This gives mixed messages to other children.

The quality of education is very variable. Some children play for long periods of time with very little interaction from staff, due to weaknesses in staff deployment and teaching. Consequently, although children are generally happy in their play, they do not benefit from high-quality interactions with staff. Staff are overstretched because they struggle to manage children's behaviour effectively. This compromises the overall quality of education. For example, children who need further challenges in activities are not given appropriate consistent teaching. This results in children becoming bored and aimlessly wandering around the room. Leaders and staff fail to provide a curriculum that meets all children's learning needs.

Despite these weaknesses, children are happy to arrive, and they form strong bonds with the caring staff. Staff are kind and respectful. They give children plenty of choice in activities. Staff play alongside children in a game to see whose car travels the furthest down a slope. They attempt to include all children in activities. For example, staff chase children around the garden and children squeal with excitement as they thoroughly enjoy this collaborative game.

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

- Staff do not take enough action to protect children from potential harm. For example, they do not intervene when children play on equipment while eating food, such as apples, or recognise this as a choking hazard. This means children's safety is not assured.
- Leaders do not have effective oversight of what it is they want children to learn. Although staff plan educational activities, these activities do not consistently build on children's existing knowledge. For example, older children take part in a writing activity to help them to recognise letters in their own name. Some children benefit from this, but others cannot concentrate or sit still long enough to benefit. As a result, learning is often incidental rather than purposeful.
- Staff do not consistently encourage all children to be polite and have good manners. They do not use effective strategies to help children learn to share or

wait their turn during activities. Staff spend long periods of time sorting out squabbles and disagreements. However, there are some children who do listen, take part in activities and are respectful of others.

- Leadership arrangements are poor. For example, although staff receive supervision, this is not effective in identifying where they need support or to develop their skills. Leaders do not monitor the quality of practice well enough to ensure they quickly identify any weaknesses.
- Staff provide opportunities for children to listen to stories. However, children struggle to engage when staff fail to address unwanted behaviour, such as children playing instruments during story time. Consequently, children are not fully supported in their literacy and language skills.
- Children learn appropriate independence skills. They dress themselves when getting ready to go outside and they can use the toilet independently. Children and babies use cutlery to feed themselves. Older children confidently use knives to prepare their own snack. They manage their own hygiene effectively.
- Parents mention that the communication with staff is strong. They look forward to finding out what their children have been doing during the day through a digital learning journal. They comment that the staff are 'wonderful' and 'kind'. Parents are grateful for the 'learning ideas' box and lending library, which they use to support their children's learning at home.
- The baby room offers a calmer environment. Staff use sign language to communicate and replicate what is happening at home. Staff are very tactile with the babies and gently soothe them when they become upset. Babies squeal with delight as they play with the jelly. They learn and mimic new words, such as 'splat' and 'splash'.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

Staff do not adequately protect children. They miss situations that could present as hazards to children's safety. For example, children walk around with food in their mouth, which could present a risk of choking. They swing back and climb on the chairs, which could lead to an accident. Despite this, staff undertake regular child protection training. They have a sound understanding of other safeguarding issues. For instance, staff know what to do if they have concerns about a child's welfare. They know the procedures to follow if they believe a family is at risk of being radicalised. Staff know the actions to take if they have concerns about the behaviour of a colleague.

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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ensure staff have a secure understanding of how to identify and minimise potential risks to children's safety, such as the risk of choking while eating	07/04/2023
implement effective arrangements for staff support and training and for the monitoring of staff practice, to help improve the quality of teaching	07/04/2023
improve staff understanding of appropriate behaviour management strategies, to provide children with clear, consistent boundaries and help them manage their emotions more effectively	07/04/2023
ensure staff are appropriately deployed, so that children are supervised effectively to promote their safety and well-being	07/04/2023
provide a challenging curriculum for children that builds on their existing knowledge and skills and helps them make progress in all areas of development.	07/04/2023

Setting details

Unique reference number	130691
Local authority	Brighton and Hove
Inspection number	10276698
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	23
Number of children on roll	42
Name of registered person	Sussex Community NHS Foundation Trust
Registered person unique reference number	RP905489
Telephone number	01273 696011 3302
Date of previous inspection	28 July 2017

Information about this early years setting

Hilltop Nursery registered in 2001. The nursery is one of three nurseries managed by Sussex Community NHS Foundation Trust. The nursery operates in the grounds of Brighton General Hospital, in Brighton, East Sussex. It is open each weekday from 8am to 6pm, all year around. The nursery is in receipt of funding for the provision of free early education for children aged two, three and four years. The provision employs six members of staff. Five of these hold relevant childcare qualifications at level 2 and above.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Tina Lambert

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the setting 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 inspector observed the interactions between children and staff and assessed the impact of teaching on children's learning.
- The manager and inspector carried out a joint observation together.
- The leaders completed a learning walk with the inspector to explain the nursery's curriculum.
- Staff spoke to the inspector about their role and their knowledge of their key children.
- Parents gave their verbal and written views about the nursery.
- The inspector observed where babies eat, sleep and play.

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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