

Inspection of Little Munchkins

Silverthorne Close, STALYBRIDGE, Cheshire SK15 2DQ

Inspection date:

2 May 2023

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

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 is compromised. When the provider was presented with an allegation about a member of staff, they did not put measures in place while it was being investigated, to safeguard children. Furthermore, managers do not have a good enough oversight to ensure safe and effective care routines for babies, such as when preparing babies' bottles. This puts children at risk of harm.

That said, children settle well in the nursery. They come into the setting happy with a friendly welcome from the manager. The managers are aware of what they intend for children to learn. This focuses on children's communication and language and personal, social and emotional development. This is due to the managers being aware of the impact that the COVID-19 pandemic is still having on these areas of development for the children in their care. However, the curriculum provided for children, although it supports these areas of learning, is not challenging enough. This does not fully support children to progress in their learning.

Children play nicely with their friends. They engage in a variety of activities, such as reading books and playing in the outdoor area. However, staff occasionally do not provide a variety of engaging experiences for children. For example, sometimes there are no activities set out for children to explore. This affects children's engagement and concentration.

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

- Children have been put at potential risk of harm. When an allegation was made against a member of staff, the provider did not have an appropriate procedure in place to safeguard children. She has not limited the contact the individual has with children while the investigation into the allegation is ongoing. Additionally, in the provider's absence, she had not made anyone aware of the allegation. This means nobody was overseeing the individual's practice. This does not adequately safeguard children.
- Care procedures pose a risk to children. Some staff involved in preparing milk for babies, do not have a good enough knowledge of how to prepare this safely. For example, milk is heated in a microwave without staff having a secure understanding of the risks this poses to children. Furthermore, this has gone unnoticed by the managers. Therefore, no risk assessment has been put into place. This does not ensure that milk is warmed evenly so it does not contain heat spots, which could burn a baby's mouth.
- Managers do not have a consistently good oversight of the quality of education. Following the previous inspection, the managers have not fully acted on the recommendation to improve experiences in children's learning. For example, some staff use questions which do not challenge children to think critically. Staff

do not consistently have high ambitions for children to progress towards. This results in children not improving steadily.

- Children show enthusiasm during experiences available to them. They freely navigate the outdoor area, developing their physical skills. However, they do not fully benefit from the curriculum. The environment is not always engaging to encourage children to be ambitious. At times, the environment is bare, with no planned experiences set out for children. This results in children not always being provided with opportunities that challenge them to focus.
- Children behave well. Staff have key strategies in place to help manage children's behaviour. They also work closely with outside agencies to support staff with this. When children struggle to share, staff step in swiftly and teach them how to compromise. Staff working with younger children regularly encourage them to use 'kind hands'. This develops children's ability to manage their own behaviour.
- Children form positive relationships with staff. Older children demonstrate confidence and will ask for help when needed. Babies receive lots of cuddles from staff which supports strong bonds between the children and their key person. This helps children settle quickly.
- Managers work closely with other professionals to support children's learning. They are in regular contact with the local authority for advice. This helps staff support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). When staff raise concerns about children's development, swift action is put in place to gain further support for children. This helps close gaps in the development of children with SEND.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

The provider does not understand their responsibilities in safeguarding children, particularly when an allegation is made about a member of staff. While awaiting direction from the local authority designated officer, the provider has not ensured that appropriate measures have been put in place to safeguard children in the interim. Additionally, the provider fails to have an effective oversight of care practices. They fail to notice staff have a lack of understanding and knowledge of some aspects of caring for babies. This puts children at risk of harm. Despite these weaknesses, staff and managers have an adequate understanding of the signs of abuse. They are aware of the procedures to follow to protect children when they are concerned that a child might be exposed to abuse outside of the setting. This helps staff identify concerns in a timely manner.

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
ensure that all staff have a sufficient understanding of safeguarding children, particularly in regard to allegations management	23/05/2023
ensure that risk assessments include safe preparation of milk	23/05/2023
implement an ambitious curriculum which is well planned and adequately challenges children to progress in their development.	06/06/2023

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY441823
Local authority	Tameside
Inspection number	10288619
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 10
Total number of places	95
Number of children on roll	82
Name of registered person	Little Munchkins Limited
Registered person unique reference number	RP531365
Telephone number	07747627565
Date of previous inspection	20 December 2018

Information about this early years setting

Little Munchkins registered in 2012 and is located in Stalybridge. The nursery employs 11 members of childcare staff. Of these, seven hold an appropriate early years qualification at level 3 or above, and one holds a level 2 qualification. The nursery opens from Monday to Friday, all year round. Sessions are from 7.30am to 6pm. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Joanne Valek

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 provision and discussed the safety and suitability of the premises.
- One of 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.
- Children spoke to the inspector during the inspection.
- The inspector talked to staff at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The inspector spoke with the nominated individual about the leadership and management of the setting.
- The special educational needs coordinator spoke to the inspector about how they support children with SEND.
- 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 joint observations of group activities with the 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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