

Inspection of Small Wonders Day Nursery

Tavistock Road, Springfield, CHELMSFORD CM1 6JN

Inspection date: 23 August 2023

Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Inadequate
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Leadership and management	Inadequate
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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 inadequate

Children's safety and well-being are not assured. This is because the provider and senior staff do not have sufficient oversight and knowledge of the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the early years foundation stage. The current fire safety and emergency evacuation procedures are poorly thought through, in particular, the means of escape for staff and younger children. This does not maintain children's safety at all times. The provider does not have the required systems in place to ensure the safe and effective running of the setting in the absence of a manager.

Children are happy and eager to join with their friends as they arrive at the nursery. They readily leave their parents and are greeted by an excited group of friends who are delighted to see them. Children form strong bonds with staff. Young children snuggle into their arms for cuddles, demonstrating their close bonds. Children show their confidence and skills to visitors. For example, very young children demonstrate to visitors how moving toys work, beaming with delight each time they make the parts spin round.

Children enjoy being physically active outdoors. Young children enjoy playing in the sand, filling their buckets using spades. Older children spend time in the sand tent. They enjoy exploring the sand with their hands while discussing their recent visits to the beach with staff. Other children use their imaginations as they imitate their favourite superheroes by running up and down the garden.

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

- There have been significant changes in the nursery over the last few months. The nursery currently has no manager in place and the deputy manager works during term time only. The provider has not ensured that the third in charge has the skills or knowledge to ensure the safe and effective running of the nursery. Despite guidance from the Essex County fire and rescue service last year, the provider has not taken steps to improve the fire evacuation procedures.
- The provider has not given effective induction to ensure that the third person in charge has a firm understanding of her roles and responsibilities. As a result, there are gaps in her knowledge which have a potential impact on the well-being of children. For example, she is unaware of the correct steps to take, in line with the nursery's own safeguarding policy, if there is an allegation against a member of staff.
- Staff know the children and their families well. They gather detailed information when children start at the setting and when children move rooms within the nursery. Staff provide activities which support children's development. For example, children skilfully turn the handles on the whisks to make bubbles in the

water. This helps to build strength in children's wrists and develop their hand-eye coordination in preparation for future learning.

- Children behave well. They understand the rules of the nursery and follow instructions from staff. Staff offer clear reminders about the importance of sharing. When children occasionally struggle to share, staff are particularly skilled at de-escalating situations sensitively and engaging children back into play. This helps children to regulate their behaviour and understand what is expected of them. Staff offer children plenty of praise and encouragement throughout the day. This helps to boost their self-esteem and confidence.
- Children show that they are developing a love of books. For example, children look through books with their friends. They turn the pages together, look at the illustrations and discuss what they think is happening in the story. They giggle together when they see a giraffe riding a car in the book. This supports children's early literacy skills.
- Staff talk to children throughout the day. They introduce action words to toddlers, associated with their play. For example, when they are teaching them to blow bubbles they repeat 'dip, dip, dip' as they put their wand back into the bottle. However, on occasions, such as mealtimes, interactions between staff and children are limited and do not give children opportunities to express their ideas and thoughts. This limits the opportunities for children to develop good speaking skills during these times.
- Staff share children's progress with parents. Parents value the 'love and kindness' that staff show their children. Parents report that their children are happy to attend and have formed strong friendships.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

The provider has failed to recognise and act when there have been allegations against adults who work with children. Those left in daily charge of the day-to-day running of the setting do not have enough knowledge to take appropriate action in the event of an allegation against a member of staff. Staff do have appropriate knowledge to recognise the signs and indicators of abuse and are aware of who to report concerns to. The provider has robust recruitment and selection procedures in place, to ensure that staff are suitable 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
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take reasonable steps to ensure the safety of children, staff and others on the premises in the case of fire or any other emergency, and that emergency evacuation procedures are effective in all areas of the nursery	22/09/2023
ensure that there is a clear management structure, which includes a manager and a named deputy who is capable of taking charge in the manager's absence	22/09/2023
ensure that staff receive effective induction training so that they have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities	22/09/2023
take action to ensure that all staff understand the correct procedures to follow should an allegation be made against a member of staff, including notifying relevant external agencies and Ofsted of the action taken, within the prescribed timescale.	22/09/2023

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

- coach staff to take advantage of opportunities throughout the daily routines to engage children in meaningful discussions to further extend their communication skills.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY453646
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10307391
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	46
Number of children on roll	108
Name of registered person	Small Wonders Day Nurseries Ltd
Registered person unique reference number	RP910814
Telephone number	01245493437
Date of previous inspection	13 August 2019

Information about this early years setting

Small Wonders Day Nursery registered in 2012. It is one of two nurseries which are privately owned and managed by Small Wonders Day Nurseries Ltd. The nursery employs eight members of childcare staff. Of these, six hold an appropriate early years qualification at level 3 or above, including one member of staff with qualified teacher status. The nursery opens from Monday to Friday, all year round, except for one week at Christmas. Sessions are from 7.30am to 6.30pm. In addition, there is a before- and after-school club and holiday club. The nursery is in receipt of funding for early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector
Shelly McDougall

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.
- The third in charge and inspector completed a learning walk together of all areas of the nursery and discussed the early years curriculum.
- 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 inspector observed the quality of education being provided, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact that this was having on children's learning.

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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