

Inspection of Little Munchkins

Silverthorne Close, STALYBRIDGE, Cheshire SK15 2DQ

Inspection date: 29 August 2023

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	Inadequate

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is inadequate

Weak leadership and management means that since the previous inspection, there has been a further decline in quality and practice. Some staff have left, which has resulted in further disorder for children and the remaining staff team. Although new staff have been appointed, they are inexperienced and have not been inducted effectively. Staff do not understand children's learning needs, including children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Most activities and experiences follow children's interests but are not focused on helping them to make good progress. For example, staff provide paper and crayons but do not help children to develop the correct pencil control. The quality of education is weak and fails to inspire or motivate children.

The lack of capacity to improve also compromises children's safety and welfare. Staff have not been trained to understand policies and procedures that are in place to keep children safe. For example, staff are unaware of safety procedures for hot food. In addition, some less experienced staff do not know what to do if faced with a concern about a colleague. These weaknesses were identified at the last inspection and no action has been taken to address them.

Despite these significant weaknesses, children happily lead their own play and demonstrate some friendly behaviours. They have fun playing in water with others. Children demonstrate their awareness of heavy and light objects during a floating activity. Babies develop some physical skills, for example, as they climb up onto soft blocks or into the arms of nurturing staff who support them to take their first few steps.

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

- Leaders do not have a good enough understanding of the curriculum. As a result, the curriculum is poorly designed and does not meet the individual learning needs of all children. Staff do not provide all children with a curriculum that offers challenge or gives children a sense of accomplishment. For example, when pre-school children are given hoops to play with, they use furniture such as chairs to create their own games instead. Children often lose interest in adult-led activities and go off to play elsewhere.
- Children with SEND have not received the support they require. The special educational needs coordinator has plans in place. However, these plans have not been shared with the staff who work with children, to help them to understand what children's SEND needs are. Staff are unable to plan to meet the needs of children who need the most help.
- Staff do not plan to promote children's next steps in learning. On entry, staff establish the skills children arrive with. However, due to a period of turbulence

and changes to the staff team, staff who are deployed with children do not know them well enough. Children enjoy some activities and experiences, however, these are not focused on helping children to make good progress. Activities have their own narrow agenda, such as to promote colour or number, and this is not conducive to meeting individual children's learning needs.

- Weak self-evaluation has failed to identify poor practice. The provider has not taken effective steps to improve the weak quality. Staff morale is at an all-time low. Despite this, they are committed to making necessary improvements.
- Children's lunchtime meal was too hot. Staff failed to recognise this, even when children expressed their concerns. Leaders have not ensured that staff are aware of possible burning risks to children when providing them with hot food. The inability to recognise dangers associated with food temperatures was raised at the previous inspection and remains an ongoing concern. Mealtimes are used to develop some good behaviours and social skills. Children sit together and talk about healthy foods as they attempt to feed themselves.
- Leaders do not provide staff with the training and support that they need. Staff are unaware of the curriculum and how to deliver this effectively. They do not always know what children need to learn right now, so children do not maintain attention as planned activities fail to motivate them. Despite this, in the main, children are happy and enjoy playing. Older children interact well. For example, boys collaborate to build a den outdoors and girls complete jigsaw puzzles together. Babies develop coordination as they play with cause-and-effect toys. They delight in posting toy coins into the electronic counting piggy bank.
- Despite the many weakness identified, parents praise the nursery and staff team. Although, they do not know what children are learning and do not currently contribute towards this, parents say they value some methods of communication. This includes a daily diary for babies that documents information such as sleep times. Parents also appreciate the photographs shared using an online application and they welcome a friendly chat at the door on arrival. Parents comment that leaders care about the welfare of local people. For example, they provide food vouchers to support disadvantaged families.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

The provider does not ensure that staff understand the nursery's procedures to help keep children safe. Some staff are unaware of food safety procedures and less experienced staff have not been trained in processes to follow if there is an allegation against a colleague. This lack of secure knowledge and awareness compromises children's safety. The provider implements other procedures more effectively. For example, they make sure that a high number of staff hold a first-aid qualification. This means there is always someone available who is suitably qualified to deal with any minor accidents. The provider conducts robust recruitment checks to ensure that staff are suitable to work with children.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

The provision is inadequate and Ofsted intends to take enforcement action.

We will issue a Welfare Requirements Notice requiring the provider to:

	Due date
ensure that all staff know what to do in the event of an allegation being raised about the conduct or actions of a colleague	15/09/2023
ensure that staff who are deployed with children are able to meet their individual needs so they make the progress that they are capable of	15/09/2023
improve staff induction, training, support and supervision so that staff develop a secure knowledge and understanding of health and safety procedures	15/09/2023
improve staff understanding of risk assessment and ensure that steps are taken to reduce risks to children, particularly regarding food temperatures	15/09/2023
improve support for children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities so they get the care and education needed to achieve the best possible outcomes.	15/09/2023

To meet the requirements of the early years foundation stage, the provider must:

	Due date
ensure that leaders implement an effective curriculum that builds on what children know and can do and focuses on what individual children need to learn and develop next	03/10/2023
keep parents up to date with children's learning and development.	03/10/2023

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY441823
Local authority	Tameside
Inspection number	10300487
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	65
Number of children on roll	61
Name of registered person	Little Munchkins Limited
Registered person unique reference number	RP531365
Telephone number	07747627565
Date of previous inspection	2 May 2023

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, six staff hold an appropriate early years qualification at level 3 or above, and four staff are unqualified. 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

Layla Davies

Inspection activities

- The inspector discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the provider and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the provider.
- The quality of education was observed and the inspector assessed the impact this has on children's learning.
- The inspector conducted a learning walk with the nursery manager. The intent of the curriculum was discussed.
- The inspector evaluated an activity with the nursery manager.
- Regular meetings were held to discuss leadership and management.
- Relevant documentation was checked and discussed, such as policies and procedures. The inspector took account of self-evaluation and checked evidence of staff suitability.
- The views of parents were obtained.
- Children and staff were spoken to throughout the inspection.

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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