

Inspection of Sunflower Pre-School

Germander Park County First School, 1 Germander Place, Conniburrow, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire MK14 7DU

Inspection date: 8 September 2023

Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
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The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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 are settled in the pre-school, and staff help those who are new to become familiar with the pre-school routine. Staff ensure that children are happy in their learning environment. However, leaders do not have a robust understanding of their legal duties. They do not recognise when they need to follow procedures and provide information to ensure children's safety.

Through their self-chosen play, children demonstrate how staff have taught them to use their imaginations and create their own storylines. Children show good concentration and high levels of enjoyment as they create a 'restaurant' and prepare foods for others. Children carefully chop up foods and hand them to others. As they do this, they name fruit and vegetables and spontaneously tell others why apples and pears are healthy eating options. This reflects discussions that staff have had with them about healthy lifestyles.

Children benefit from the high expectations that staff have for their physical development. The manager has used funding effectively to repurpose the outdoor play area and give children opportunities they may otherwise not have for fresh air and exercise. For instance, younger children demonstrate their confidence to climb up steps, and they use their core strength to pull themselves up to the slide platform. Older children negotiate space well and use their legs to propel themselves along on ride-on toys.

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

- Leaders at the pre-school have statutory policies and procedures in place. However, they do not act in accordance with these when there are concerns about staff suitability. This means that they do not fully understand them. For example, leaders do not refer concerns about those working with children to the local authority designated officer, as required. Instead, they discuss these with school staff not associated with the pre-school. This is not compliant with legislation, such as data protection regulations.
- The manager ensures that restrictions are in place for the duties of new staff awaiting Disclosure and Barring Service checks. However, the same robust procedures have not been applied to the pre-school committee. For instance, there have been numerous changes to members of the committee, and the necessary information has not been provided in order for Ofsted to complete the required suitability checks.
- Staff have a very secure understanding of the children in their care, and they plan the curriculum precisely to their needs. For instance, staff complete home visits to see children in their home environment. They recognise that some children have few opportunities for play and physical exercise at home and

spend large periods of time engaged with technology. Staff therefore focus their curriculum on teaching children how to use their imaginations, engage with their peers and build connections with the world around them. This is very effective and gives children opportunities that they otherwise do not have.

- Staff ensure that the curriculum is inclusive. For example, many children are bilingual, and a huge variety of languages are represented in the pre-school. Staff find out key words in the languages that children speak and use these successfully at routine times to support children's understanding. Staff similarly use strategies, such as visual supports, to help children to communicate and understand what is happening now and next. Staff find out detailed information about children's additional needs and strategies for supporting children, and they implement these swiftly and consistently as soon as children begin attending.
- Staff are keen to promote children's independence. For instance, at snack times, they encourage children to pour their own drinks. However, at times, staff expectations do not fully reflect the stages different children are at. For example, staff provide too much support to older children during handwashing routines, pumping liquid soap onto children's hands and handing them hand towels. At other times, expectations are too high, and staff expect children to use tools and equipment, such as age-appropriate knives, to cut their vegetables for snack without demonstrating how to use these. This is appropriate for some children who have experienced this before but is too challenging for children new to attending.
- Staff support children to learn new rules and boundaries consistently well. For instance, they help children to learn which way to go up and down the slide. Staff repeat rules sensitively and use visual supports where needed. Children new to attending demonstrate that they are beginning to understand what is expected.
- Managers support staff well. For example, they ensure that there is time before each session to discuss planning and the needs of children attending each day. Leaders complete routine staff supervisions. They also complete focused observations on aspects of the provision and the impact on children's levels of engagement. This helps the team to review the effectiveness of the curriculum and make adaptations where needed.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

Staff ensure that the premises are safe and suitable for children. For instance, they check indoor and outdoor spaces before children arrive. Staff implement emergency evacuation procedures, which helps children learn how to respond to situations such as a fire. Staff understand the signs and symptoms of abuse, and they are familiar with local safeguarding issues. They know who to refer concerns to in relation to children's welfare and any allegations. However, they do not recognise situations when they need to apply these procedures in practice, and they do not refer concerns about staff suitability and share information appropriately about allegations.

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
provide training to ensure that all staff and committee members understand their safeguarding policy and the procedures they must follow in the event of allegations and concerns about staff suitability	20/10/2023
ensure that all leaders understand and comply with their legal duties, particularly in relation to the General Data Protection Regulation and confidentiality	20/10/2023
provide the necessary information in order for Ofsted to check the suitability of committee members.	20/10/2023

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

- adapt the implementation of routines, such as snack and handwashing, to reflect the prior knowledge and experience of children.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY307484
Local authority	Milton Keynes
Inspection number	10305420
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	2 to 4
Total number of places	30
Number of children on roll	28
Name of registered person	Sunflower Pre-School Committee
Registered person unique reference number	RP517357
Telephone number	01908 528934
Date of previous inspection	21 February 2018

Information about this early years setting

Sunflower Pre-School registered in 1997 and re-registered in the current premises in 2005. It operates from a self-contained space in Germander Park County School, in Conniburrow, Milton Keynes. The pre-school operates five days a week, term time only, from 9am until 3pm. The pre-school receives funding for the provision of free early education for children aged two, three and four years. The pre-school employs four members of staff, each of whom hold qualifications at level 3.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Lisa Dailey

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.
- The manager talked to the inspector about their curriculum and what they want their children to learn.
- The inspector talked to staff at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The manager and inspector carried out a joint observation of a creative activity.
- The inspector spoke to parents and considered their views.

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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