

Inspection of Nature Wanderers Ltd

Scout Association, Rushby Mead, Letchworth Garden City SG6 1RS

Inspection date: 10 October 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

Not applicable

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is inadequate

Children do not receive the quality of care and education to which they are entitled. There is a very limited curriculum in place and children's learning needs are not met. Staff frequently focus on trying to meet children's care needs, which leaves them with little time to respond to support children's learning.

Staff care for a wide range of children, including children of compulsory school age. They struggle to meet the needs of all children. Staff do not plan engaging or purposeful play experiences and, as such, children are frequently left to organise their own play. This results in some children becoming bored and finding inappropriate activities to engage in. For example, children swing dangerously on rope swings. Staff do not interact with children to engage them in learning or to play safely. This dangerous play affects the care and learning of the younger children.

Staff are kind to children. At times, when they are able to engage directly with children, they prompt their interests and encourage them in fun activities. For example, a staff member helps children to make mud pies. They help them to explore the forest area, looking for 'ingredients' for their pies and bring them back to 'cook'. Other children show interest in music. A staff member encourages them to find objects around them to make music with. Children find sticks and bang them on a large metal tube, moving to the rhythm. However, these activities are infrequent and staff do not extend these further, as they are frequently distracted by younger children who wander off.

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

- Ofsted served a welfare requirements notice, following a recent visit to the setting. The provider has responded to some of the requirements, but has not complied with all requirements. There are multiple breaches of safeguarding and welfare requirements and learning and development requirements that have a significant impact on children's safety and well-being. The provider has not ensured that the person who they have left in charge has sufficient knowledge and understanding to provide care and education of the quality required to meet children's needs. Management arrangements across the setting are ineffective.
- The provider shows a willingness to make changes to the provision. They recognise the significant weaknesses. However, the provider has not taken enough action to meet requirements while the staffing arrangements go through a period of change. The provider acknowledges that they have not had sufficient oversight of the quality of the provision for some time and have not taken prompt action to address weaknesses as they developed.
- The provider is unaware of some requirements of their registration. For

example, they have not made sure that staff carry out a progress check for all children who attend between the ages of two and three years. The assessment of children's needs is not sufficient to help staff understand children's learning needs. Staff do not have deep enough understanding of children's individual needs to provide them with good opportunities for development. This includes children who are in receipt of targeted funding, such as funded two-year-olds.

- Children's personal care needs are broadly met. For example, children who have minor accidents are comforted and given appropriate first-aid treatment. Other children are cuddled when distressed and staff follow clear routines to meet children's toileting needs. However, because staff prioritise some care routines over children's other needs, they do not provide enough support for children's development. The key-person system is not effective, as staff do not use what they know about children to provide meaningful support for them.
- Some activities, especially those for school-age children and the full group, are mundane and not planned to hold the interest of the range of children present. At times, younger children are left to their own devices and not engaged in meaningful activity. Due to the competing needs of the wide range of children that attend, staff have little time to focus on teaching young children. Some children run around, disrupting the learning of other children. Other children spend time sitting in hammocks outdoors, and staff do not draw them back into the group or provide things to spark their interest.
- Staff are not deployed effectively to meet children's learning needs. For example, children are eager to use specific resources and ask for these throughout the day. However, staff repeatedly tell children they can do this later. When the provider eventually facilitates the activity, only a small group of children take part at first. Initially, children are closely supervised as they use saws, hammers and hand-operated drills to cut and drill into wood. This is clearly something they enjoy. However, more children join the group and it becomes difficult for the provider to supervise safely. Other staff do not come to help and the activity abruptly ends.
- Some children with special educational needs and/or disabilities have one-to-one support. These children are closely supervised to support their development and well-being. Parents praise the steps that staff take to work with outside professionals involved in their children's development.
- Some action has been taken to improve staff understanding of child protection, following the serving of a welfare requirements notice by Ofsted. For example, staff have attended relevant child protection training and are now clear about signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect and how to refer concerns in line with local procedures. Improvements have been made to the security of the boundaries at the site. A gap by the main gate has been closed, and there are now locked gates to prevent children from accessing some areas unsupervised.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

The provider has failed to ensure that staff are sufficiently vigilant to ensure

children's safety. For example, a young child was able to reach an open door to a storage garage which contains items that are unsafe. Staff did not notice this happening and did not react swiftly enough. Other staff do not intervene when young children walk around with food in their mouths. Staff do not adequately supervise children when they use rope swings to prevent them from swinging into the path of other children. The provider does not ensure that risk assessments are robust to respond to developing hazards. This means children's welfare and safety are not assured.

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 any person who takes the role of deputy manager in the absence of the manager is given the skills and the knowledge they require to take charge effectively	01/11/2023
manage staff deployment to ensure that children are always adequately supervised to meet their needs and to keep them safe, including while eating	01/11/2023
ensure that all staff have sufficient understanding of risk assessment to enable them to identify developing hazards and to take swift and effective action to keep children safe	01/11/2023
provide relevant development opportunities to ensure that all staff have a secure understanding of their roles and responsibilities and what is expected of them to meet children's needs	01/11/2023

ensure that the key-person system is effectively implemented and that the roles of key persons are clearly understood by all staff, to enable them to meet children's needs and provide a settled relationship for each child.	01/11/2023
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To meet the requirements of the early years foundation stage, the provider must:

	Due date
ensure that staff consider the individual needs, interests and stage of development of each child in their care, and use this information to plan challenging and enjoyable experiences for children in all of the areas of learning and development	27/11/2023
ensure that staff respond to each child's emerging needs and guide their development through warm, positive interactions, and adjust their practice to the individual rates at which children develop and learn	27/11/2023
ensure that you review the progress of each child between the age of two and three years and share a short written summary with parents and/or carers of their child's development in the prime areas.	01/11/2023

Setting details

Unique reference number	2741949
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10310894
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 8
Total number of places	48
Number of children on roll	27
Name of registered person	Nature Wanderers Ltd
Registered person unique reference number	2631461
Telephone number	07379792888
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

Nature Wanderers Ltd registered in 2023 and is situated in Letchworth, Hertfordshire. The setting is open Monday to Friday, from 9am to 4pm, during term time. It provides a holiday club during most school holidays. The setting employs six members of childcare staff. Of these, three hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 or above. The setting receives funding for the provision of early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Naomi Brown

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 provider/manager joined the inspector on a learning walk and talked to the inspector about their curriculum and what they want their children to learn.
- The inspector spoke to children, to find out about their time at the setting.
- Staff spoke to the inspector during the inspection.
- 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 outdoor activities with the provider/manager.
- 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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