

Inspection of Unicorn Day Nursery

Shelsey Avenue, Oldbury B69 1BP

Inspection date:

24 October 2023

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Inadequate

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision requires improvement

The new manager has been proactive since very recently stepping into the post. The many improvements to practice mean that children's safety is now assured. However, the provider has not yet taken enough action to raise the quality of the provision to good.

Staff greet children as they arrive, and support them to settle quickly. They are warm and caring, and help children to feel happy and safe. However, the quality of staff teaching is variable. Some staff do not implement a curriculum that focuses on the specific learning needs of all children. This results in children not always being engaged in purposeful learning. For example, there are occasions when children flit from one thing to the next and staff do not consider how to tailor experiences to support their learning. That said, some staff working with older children are beginning to implement strategies to support children's listening, attention and language skills. Those working with babies and toddlers sing to them and narrate their play to support emerging language.

Children benefit from lots of opportunities to play outdoors. Staff provide some interactions to support their physical development. Younger children enjoy a parachute game and have opportunities to use a range of tools to build their small muscles. Older children enjoy mastering obstacle courses. They chat to their friends and staff as they hunt for bugs, and have fun as they run around together and push each other on bicycles. However, staff do not give children consistent messages about behaviour expectations, and this is somewhat confusing for them. This means children do not always listen to staff or understand what is being expected of them. Nevertheless, children generally behave well. Staff help them to manage conflict and to share and take turns. Children build lovely friendships and enjoy sharing experiences together.

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

- The new manager has made vast improvements in the short time she has been in post. She is implementing new ideas and has focused on staff well-being to help them to feel valued and to show that their contribution matters. She has ensured staff's safeguarding knowledge is up to date and has identified some training needs. This is going some way to improving practice.
- The arrangements for supervision and induction are not yet embedded to raise the quality of the provision to a consistently good level. The manager has not received a full induction to help her to embed the curriculum. Some staff teaching is variable, and their interactions do not always support children to extend their learning. This results in children not engaging in purposeful learning.

- Children benefit from a key person, who gets to know them well. Key persons support children's emotional well-being and build positive relationships with their parents. They complete observations and find out about children's interests. However, they do not always use information about children's development to plan specifically for what children need to learn next. At times, children are not challenged enough to help them make consistently good progress.
- Some staff have completed training to assess and support children's communication and language. They have begun to implement small-group sessions to help children to catch up where gaps have been identified. Staff read to children and engage them in singing their favourite nursery rhymes. Some interactions support back-and-forth conversations to help children to become confident talkers. Older children enjoy talking about stories and eagerly draw pictures to represent the characters and scenes from the book.
- During group activities indoors, some staff begin with talking about the nursery rules. They use props and pictures to help children to learn about behaviour expectations. However, this is not consistent and the mixed messages that children receive are, at times, confusing for them. Children are told not to run around and bump into each other as they play outdoors. However, the reason for this is not explained and they are left to continue. This does not help children to learn about the effects that their behaviour can have on others.
- Staff are sensitive to the needs of babies and young children. They provide reassurance to help them to take part in new experiences, such as sensory play. Staff sit with babies and children at sleep time to ensure safe sleep routines.
- Children's independence is promoted well. They are encouraged to make choices in their play and learning. Staff encourage older children to develop confidence with managing their self-care skills. Children learn to pour their own drinks and serve their meals. Staff help children to learn about healthy foods.
- Staff share some information with parents about what their children like to do at nursery. They send interest sheets home to gain ideas of what children's interests and experiences are at home. However, staff do not always discuss with parents how they can fully support their children within all areas of their development at home. That said, parents speak positively about the experiences that their children receive at nursery.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Children's safety is assured because risk assessments are now effective. The environments are safe and secure, and hazards are identified and minimised to keep children safe. Staff supervise children well and ensure they are always within sight or hearing. Staff understand the signs of abuse, and know the procedures to follow should they have a concern about a child in their care or if an allegation is made against a member of staff. Processes have been improved to ensure all staff are suitably vetted and recruitment and suitability records are maintained.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

	Due date
improve the arrangements for supervision and induction, so that all staff, including the manager, are receiving effective coaching and support to continually raise the quality of learning and development experiences for all children	29/12/2023
help staff to provide a curriculum that is ambitious and well sequenced for all children, to focus on their next steps for learning, build on prior experiences and support them to make consistently good progress.	29/12/2023

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

- enhance communication with parents to help and guide them to understand how to further support their child's development at home
- provide consistent messages to children, so that they are fully aware of expectations and boundaries.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY386701
Local authority	Sandwell
Inspection number	10298160
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 11
Total number of places	73
Number of children on roll	62
Name of registered person	Sandwell Supply Nursery Services Limited
Registered person unique reference number	RP535386
Telephone number	0121 552 5242
Date of previous inspection	16 May 2023

Information about this early years setting

Unicorn Day Nursery registered in 2009 and is situated in Oldbury, West Midlands. The nursery employs 20 members of childcare staff. Of these, 16 hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 2 and above, including one who holds a level 5 and one with qualified teacher status. The nursery opens from Monday to Friday all year round, except for bank holidays. Sessions are from 7.30am to 6pm. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. It operates a before- and after-school club during term time. Sessions are from 7.30am to 8.40am and 3.30pm to 6pm. A holiday club operates from 7.30am to 6pm during school holidays.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Emma McCabe

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 manager joined the inspector on a learning walk and talked to the inspector about their curriculum and what they want their children to learn.
- Children told the inspector about their friends and what they like to do when they are at nursery.
- The inspector talked to staff at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their views.
- 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 a joint observation of a group activity with the 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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