

Inspection of Ellesmere Ducklings Pre-School

Ellesmere Pre-School Unit, Ellesmere Primary School, Elson Road, Ellesmere, Shropshire SY12 9EU

Inspection date: 22 November 2023

Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
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

Due to weaknesses in leadership and management, children's safety is not assured. This is because recruitment procedures are not robust for all staff working with the children. Despite this, staff provide nurturing care for children. Children's level of concentration and engagement is very high for their age and stage of development. Children stay at activities, remain focused and can concentrate. This is as a result of the well-planned routines. Staff help children to follow simple rules, and learn skills, such as sharing popular toys. This contributes to children's good behaviour. The teaching of values is woven well through the curriculum to help children to learn about simple rules, respect the choices of others, and explore similarities and differences. This helps to prepare children for life in modern Britain.

The skilled staff identify children who need additional support. They quickly refer them for assessment and obtain help from other professionals where needed. Staff meet children's individual learning needs sensitively, while still being ambitious for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This enables children with SEND to access the same learning opportunities as other children, but in a individualised way. Children with SEND develop the skills of being able join in with group activities in accordance with their targets.

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

- The committee do not have the knowledge and skills needed to ensure that all staff are appropriately vetted. Their monitoring of the provision is weak and, therefore, they have not identified and addressed gaps in recruitment procedures, especially for staff who are employed on a casual basis. The committee fail to maintain evidence of all vetting checks for staff. The committee's leadership of safeguarding is weak.
- There is a well-thought-out curriculum that helps to nurture young children and support them to develop the knowledge and skills they need for the next stage in their learning. Staff have worked well with the host school nursery staff to identify the knowledge and skills children need for when they transition. Leaders have designed a curriculum which is helping children to acquire the intended knowledge and skills in readiness for the move on to nursery, and staff deliver this well. Staff support children to communicate their own needs, become toilet trained, and to follow routines and instructions in readiness for their next stage in learning.
- Staff give careful consideration to the promotion of children's physical development. They plan activities to help to develop children's small hand muscles, such as making marks with different implements. Staff also provide experiences to help children to develop their larger muscles. Outside, children practise walking on different surfaces. This planned experience helps them when

they get to school to be able to move around safely at the forest school site.

- Children's acquisition of language is rapid. Parents comment on how quickly their children's talking develops after starting at the pre-school, because of the activities staff provide. Young children are becoming confident communicators. They constantly learn new words, such as 'dripping,' and staff help them to explore the meaning of new vocabulary.
- Key persons work with parents to understand what children know, can do, and like when they first start attending. They keep this dialogue going with parents throughout children's time at the pre-school. Parents know what their children have been learning about at pre-school, and extend their children's learning at home, using the information shared with them by staff. Recently, this has helped children to develop their essential knowledge of colour recognition, both at the pre-school and at home.
- Staff plan well for the promotion of healthy lifestyles through the curriculum. This helps children to engage in activities to explore different foods, deepen their understanding of what is healthy for their body, and how to take care of themselves.
- Leaders evaluate the quality of education well through supervision of practice. They have recently made changes to the organisation of mealtimes. This has enabled lunch and snack times to become an opportunity for learning and practising skills, such as talking to others in a conversation, and helping children to make independent choices. This helps to promote children's personal and social development.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

The committee, as the employer, have not completed all pre-employment checks on casual staff, specifically obtaining references. Therefore, not all staff have received the required checks to help to ensure they are safe to work with the children. This puts children's safety at risk. Despite this, staff have a sound understanding of child protection procedures. They can identify potential harm to children and know the procedures for reporting any concerns about the welfare of a child. Leaders work with other agencies to help to ensure families receive the help they need. The curriculum helps children from a young age to learn how to use technology safely.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

	Due date
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implement effective systems to ensure that all pre-employment checks are completed, including obtaining references for all staff, to help to check that all those working with children are suitable to do so	22/02/2024
ensure that records, specifically information of staff's enhanced criminal record checks, are maintained and easily available.	22/01/2024

Setting details

Unique reference number	224090
Local authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	10311957
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	2 to 3
Total number of places	24
Number of children on roll	25
Name of registered person	Ellesmere Ducklings Pre-School Committee
Registered person unique reference number	RP907251
Telephone number	07549 134893
Date of previous inspection	17 April 2018

Information about this early years setting

Ellesmere Ducklings Pre-School registered in 1997 and is run by a committee. The provider employs four members of staff. Of these, three staff hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 2 and above. The setting opens from Monday to Friday, during term times. Sessions are from 8.45am until 3pm. The provider receives funding to provide early education for two- and three-year-olds.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Scott Thomas-White

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 manager 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.
- The inspector communicated with children, parents and staff at appropriate times during the inspection.
- The inspector spoke with the manager who is also the nominated individual about the leadership and management of the setting. The manager provided the inspector with a sample of key documentation on request.
- 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 group activities with the manager.

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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