

Inspection of Circus Day Nursery Ltd

Pittville Circus Road, CHELTENHAM, Gloucestershire GL52 2PZ

Inspection date:

13 November 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

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision requires improvement

Leaders and managers have worked hard to improve staff morale and to meet the actions set during the last inspection. For example, they have introduced reward and incentive programmes to support staff with their mental health and well-being. In addition, staff are undertaking further training to improve their skills and knowledge so they can better support children's learning and development.

Staff welcome children warmly into the setting. Even the youngest children separate happily from parents, eager to join in with the play and learning. Managers make sure there is an effective key-person system in place. Staff know their children well. They provide different activities to engage children and build on their interests. For example, staff provide a sensory activity for younger children to explore coloured rice and electric tealights to celebrate Diwali. Older children enjoy physical activities and games with the parachute outdoors. However, there are weaknesses in how some staff implement the curriculum, especially in supporting children's communication and language, and personal, social and emotional development. There are some inconsistencies in how well staff interact with children and support them to understand what is expected of them in relation to making progress in their learning and managing their feelings and behaviour. This includes children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

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

- Leaders and managers have worked with staff to identify clear learning intentions and to design a broad curriculum. Although managers have measures in place to monitor the curriculum and staff practice, these are not yet having the desired impact, and the quality of education is not consistent throughout the nursery. As a result, children's overall experiences across the nursery are variable.
- The special educational needs coordinator works with parents and other professionals to put plans in place to support children with SEND or those who have gaps in their learning. However, staff do not consistently use these plans or consider the needs of these children during changes in the routine or when trying to encourage children to join in with group activities. At these times, some children struggle to understand what staff expect of them, or they become disengaged in their learning.
- The support in place for children's personal, social and emotional development is inconsistent. Leaders have implemented pictures as visual cues to help children understand the expectations for behaviour and when there are changes in the routines. However, staff are not consistent in using them. For example, when it is time to put the toys away, not all children are shown the pictures for the change in the routine, so some children continue playing. At other times,

children take toys from their peers or refuse to share. Staff do not step in to help children understand why their behaviours are not acceptable.

- Some staff engage children well. For instance, a group of pre-school children have a wonderful story time with staff. Staff use puppets and toys, and they alter the tone of their voice to reflect different characters, to capture children's imaginations. Children listen well and focus carefully on the story. They talk about the 'spikey' prickles on the hedgehog. Later, they explore the 'egg lights' and talk with staff about how they might contain baby dinosaurs. Children talk with staff about how characters may be feeling and relate this to how they feel at different times.
- All staff recognise the benefit of outdoor play for children. They provide children with plenty of opportunities to develop their physical skills and start to manage risks. Staff are developing a forest school area for children to use tools, learn how to stay safe around a firepit and care for their natural environments. Other spaces allow children to develop their large-muscle skills. For example, children have fun climbing the wooden climbing frames and sliding down the slides. They experiment with different ways of moving along wooden balance beams, walking, crawling and then jumping off the end. Other children learn to use pedals on bicycles. They negotiate safe pathways around the outdoor area and make sure that passengers hold on tight as they ride around. However, indoors, staff struggle to engage children as well as they do outdoors. Some children lose interest in activities or wander off to other rooms. At times, staff are busy with small groups of children and miss when others want to join in.
- Leaders and managers recognise and identify weaknesses in the nursery. They make plans to take action to improve experiences for children. However, as some of these plans are quite recent, there has not been sufficient time for them to take effect. Therefore, children's learning experiences are varied and not yet of a consistently high quality.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and managers make sure that all staff know and understand the procedures to follow should they have concerns about children. Staff know their roles and responsibilities for keeping children safe. They are alert to signs that a child may be at risk of harm and know how to refer any concerns. Staff know the reporting procedures for allegations against staff, including when this means making a referral to external agencies. Managers have good systems for recruiting and monitoring staff. They carry out checks on any new members of staff and ensure that all staff remain suitable to work with children.

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
ensure that staff use strategies for supporting positive behaviour consistently in ways that help children to manage their emotions and understand what is expected of them	08/12/2023
ensure that staff provide targeted support for children who need additional help so that all children, including those with SEND, achieve in their key next steps.	08/12/2023

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

- continue to embed the curriculum to make sure staff understand and implement it effectively across all age ranges.

Setting details

Unique reference number	101756
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	10269338
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 4
Total number of places	119
Number of children on roll	201
Name of registered person	Circus Day Nursery Ltd
Registered person unique reference number	RP527854
Telephone number	01242 253222
Date of previous inspection	25 November 2022

Information about this early years setting

Circus Day Nursery registered in 1997. It operates in Pittville, Cheltenham. It is open Monday to Friday, from 8am to 6pm, all year round. The setting employs 49 staff, 46 of whom work directly with the children. Of these, one holds qualified teacher status, four, including the manager, hold appropriate childcare qualifications at level 6, and 16 hold appropriate childcare qualifications at level 3. The nursery receives funding to provide early education for children aged two-, three-, and four-years-old.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors

Anita McKelvey
Victoria Nicolson

Inspection activities

- The inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the provider and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the provider.
- The deputy manager, manager and lead inspector completed a learning walk together of all areas of the nursery and discussed the early years curriculum.
- The inspectors spoke to children, to find out about their time at the setting.
- The lead inspector spoke with the nominated individual about the leadership and management of the setting.
- The inspectors observed the quality of education being provided, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact that this was having on children's learning.
- The second inspector carried out joint observations of group activities with the deputy manager.
- The second inspector spoke to several parents during the inspection and took account of 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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