

Inspection of Punch And Judy Playgroup

Lympne Village Hall, Aldington Road, Lympne, HYTHE, Kent CT21 4LE

Inspection date: 24 November 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

Good

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is inadequate

Breaches to the safeguarding and welfare requirements have an impact on children's safety, learning and well-being. The committee and the manager fail to complete the necessary vetting checks to ensure those who have regular contact with children are suitable to do so. Risk assessment is not effective at identifying and minimising potential risk to children. This includes the security of the premises during drop-off and collection times. Furthermore, there is not a named deputy who is able to lead the setting in the manager's absence.

Children do not have access to a curriculum that is ambitious and well sequenced. This means that children do not receive a good start to their early education. For instance, they do not receive the support they need to be effective communicators. Staff do not model language well and will often stand behind children when addressing them or giving instructions. This limits the opportunities children have to observe word formation and develop their speaking skills.

Despite these weaknesses, most children enjoy their time at the setting. They arrive eager to select their favourite toys. Children form positive attachments with staff, who are caring and affectionate. Some children start to develop friendships as they enjoy spending their time together, chatting and engaging in role play. The connections children form with others help them to gain a sense of belonging.

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

- Leadership and management are not effective. For example, procedures in place to assess the suitability of staff during recruitment and on an ongoing basis are not robust. There is not a named deputy to act in the manager's absence. Staff do not have a secure understanding of their safeguarding policies and procedures, and data storage is not secure. The failings in leadership and management have an impact on all areas of the setting.
- Induction and supervision arrangements are not effective in ensuring that staff have the knowledge and skills they need to fulfil their role, including keeping children safe from potential harm. For instance, the manager does not share risk assessments, including those relating to outings, with new staff. This leads to avoidable incidents. Staff, including the manager, do not receive regular supervision that provides them with support and challenge. As a result, although staff are passionate about wanting to make a difference, they feel ineffective, despite their best efforts.
- The manager and staff do not have a secure understanding of the curriculum. They know what children can do but fail to use this information to identify what children need to learn next. Staff do not plan activities with clear learning intentions. For example, staff set up a hairdressing station with a variety of

mannequin heads, brushes, combs, and clips. They recognise that children gain enjoyment from the activity but do not consider potential learning opportunities. This means that children's learning is often incidental.

- Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) do not receive the support they need to make sufficient progress. Staff do not use assessments effectively to identify and respond swiftly to emerging gaps in children's development. Shared targets from other professionals working with children are not implemented. Furthermore, staff with responsibility for children with SEND do not have a secure understanding of where to access support for those children who are falling behind.
- Staff do not provide children with enough support to promote their independence. They routinely complete tasks rather than teaching children the techniques to master these themselves. For example, during mealtimes, staff open children's packets and containers instead of demonstrating techniques to enable children to become independent. In addition, staff do not recognise when to allow children to continue practising specific skills, such as rolling dough balls for their sculptures. Staff intervene and roll the ball, which does not encourage children to persevere until they succeed.
- Children have opportunities to practise their physical skills, both inside and outside. This helps them develop the skills they will need to support future learning, such as pre-writing skills. Children enjoy burning off their energy in the garden, where they climb, run and jump. They learn to develop coordination as they peddle and steer ride-on toys, successfully negotiating the space around them. Children develop their pincer grip as they manipulate small items when creating towers.
- Children have some opportunities to learn about what makes them unique. For example, staff provide children with pre-cut plain paper people. Staff encourage children to study their features with hand-held mirrors and draw what they see on to their paper person. During the activity, staff help children to identify their similarities and differences, such as eye and hair colour. This helps some children to start to develop a sense of self.
- Staff work in partnership with parents and share children's progress during face-to-face events held every six months. This provides parents with the opportunity to have in-depth discussions with their child's key person. Staff also share information about children's day with parents during collection. Parents report that they are happy with the progress their children make during their time at the setting.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

Staff do not have a secure understanding of the procedures in place to keep children safe. This is because not all staff have the opportunity to familiarise themselves with safeguarding policies and procedures. As a result, not all staff know the procedure to follow should they need to escalate a concern, including those relating to other members of staff. Furthermore, the manager does not

ensure that sensitive information is kept secure and only accessible to those who have authorised access. This means that children's safety and security cannot be assured. Despite this, staff were able to demonstrate a good understanding of the signs and symptoms of abuse, including those relating to county lines and physical abuse.

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 staff have a secure understanding of safeguarding policies and procedures and know the action to take should they need to escalate a concern in relation to the conduct of another staff member	15/12/2023
ensure arrangements to assess the suitability of staff during recruitment and on an ongoing basis are robust and adhered to, including the completion of vetting checks	15/12/2023
ensure staff have access to a thorough induction and effective supervision, providing them with the knowledge and skills they need to fulfil their roles	15/12/2023
ensure there is an appropriate named deputy who is capable and qualified to take charge in the manager's absence	15/12/2023
ensure risk assessments are thorough, effective at identifying and minimising potential risks to children, and fully understood and adhered to by staff	15/12/2023
improve the arrangements in place to support children with SEND, including the implementation of shared targets and intervention at the earliest opportunity	15/12/2023

improve information security arrangements to ensure that confidential data is kept secure.	15/12/2023
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To meet the requirements of the early years foundation stage, the provider must:

	Due date
plan an ambitious and engaging curriculum that reflects children's individual learning needs, interests and stage of development, enabling them to make good progress	02/02/2024
ensure that progress checks completed for children aged between two and three are accurate and clearly identify any gaps in children's learning.	02/02/2024

Setting details

Unique reference number	127358
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10319687
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	26
Number of children on roll	26
Name of registered person	Punch And Judy Playgroup, Lymgne Committee
Registered person unique reference number	RP522610
Telephone number	07527111584
Date of previous inspection	9 October 2019

Information about this early years setting

Punch And Judy Playgroup registered in 1999. The playgroup is open each weekday, during school term times. It opens from 9am to 3pm on Mondays, Thursdays and Fridays, and from 9am to 12.45pm on Wednesdays. The playgroup committee employs four staff, of whom all hold appropriate early years qualifications. The playgroup receives funding to provide free early education for three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Paula Sissons

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 and the inspector completed a learning walk together of all areas of the provision and discussed the early years curriculum.
- The inspector talked to the manager, staff and children at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The inspector observed the quality of education being provided and assessed the impact that this was having on children's learning.
- The inspector spoke to 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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