

Inspection of St Thomas' Pre-School

St Thomas' Pre-School, Marriott Hall, Church Road, Noak Hill, Romford, Essex RM4 1LD

Inspection date: 30 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	Not applicable

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is inadequate

Risk assessments are ineffective. Managers and staff do not complete thorough risk assessments of the environment. They fail to identify potential risks and do not always take action to remove or minimise these. Staff deployment and the supervision of children do not ensure children's safety. Some children are out of sight of staff. This means that, at times, staff do not meet the individual needs of some children because they are not aware when children need additional support to manage their behaviour. This compromises children's well-being and their understanding of how to behave safely.

Children are happy when they arrive, and staff are kind and considerate towards children. However, the learning and development needs of the children are not met well. Staff do not provide a high-quality sequenced curriculum. They fail to provide learning experiences for children that support them to develop further in preparation for school. The settling-in policy does not work. Children are not settled in gradually, which affects their emotional well-being as the session progresses. Children become tired and stressed with staff who are not prepared for this, all of which does not support meeting children's care or educational needs. Children are not motivated to learn and their behaviour deteriorates throughout the day. Staff do not have high expectations for children.

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

- The provider fails to monitor the setting well. Her oversight of the setting since registration has been poor and not effective, as she has failed to identify significant weaknesses in practice. This has resulted in a dramatic drop in standards across the whole provision and has led to poor staff morale.
- Risk assessments are not effective. Heater covers are not secure, which means children have easy access to heaters reaching high temperatures. Keys to doors located indoors are not placed out of reach of children, which means children access the keys and lock the door from inside. The playroom is not well organised and is chaotic. Children run around or climb up furniture to reach large jugs of milk, and staff do not supervise them adequately. Resources and messy play materials, such as play dough and paint, are all over the floor and not cleared away, causing a hazard. Staff do not act quickly when water is spilt on the floor during water-play activities. This causes children to slip and fall.
- The large playroom is poorly organised to meet children's learning needs. Staff do not show a secure understanding of how children learn and are merely supervising children rather than offering them a rich learning environment. Consequently, children's behaviour is affected and they become bored and disruptive. This has a particular impact on children who display behavioural challenges and children with additional needs. Staff lack the training and

understanding to manage these stressful situations and they struggle to attend to all children's needs.

- Leaders and managers have not put adequate measures in place to support existing staff. Staff supervisions are ineffective, as managers do not help staff to improve their teaching practice, and staff do not consistently show an understanding of how children learn and develop. Staff do not supervise children well or provide high-quality interactions for children, including children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). As a result, children do not stay engaged in their play and learning. This limits the progress that all children can make in their development.
- Staff aim to work with other agencies to obtain support and funding for children with SEND. The provider uses additional funding for early years pupil premium to purchase resources to help support all children's language development.
- Staff support children's understanding of hygiene practices appropriately. For example, children are encouraged to wash their hands before eating and after using the toilet. Staff meet children's care needs for nappy changing and record all nappy changes to share with parents.
- Children enjoy outdoor play as they collect leaves in the nature garden. They enjoy fresh air and exercise, which helps support their health and well-being. Children move freely using their gross and fine motor skills as they run and play in the playhouse. Staff offer children indoor water-play activities, which supports their sensory development and creativity. Children splash and share water toys as they have fun and enjoy the activity.
- Parents speak highly of staff and about the progress their children are making. Parents of children with additional needs are happy and emphasise the input they have received from staff to support their children. They say that staff are friendly and approachable. However, some parents do not know who their child's key person is. Parents have access to the parent app and speak to staff daily at the door on arrival and when collecting their children.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

Due to serious weaknesses in leadership and management, children's safety cannot be assured. Risk assessments do not always consider the individual needs of some children in the nursery. This does not prevent children from behaving in a way that may compromise their safety. In addition, the organisation of the learning environment and resources does not always promote children's safety. However, the manager and staff show that they understand their child protection responsibilities. Leaders ensure staff understand their roles and responsibilities in identifying any signs of abuse and know what action to take. Staff complete safeguarding training to ensure that their knowledge is current. Staff have a secure understanding of safeguarding issues, such as radicalisation, bullying and grooming. Leaders carry out thorough vetting and recruitment procedures when employing staff. They check staff's ongoing suitability to work with children. Leaders work in partnership with other agencies to safeguard children effectively.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

	Due date
ensure that risk assessments are effective and that swift action is taken to minimise risks to children's safety and well-being	29/12/2023
ensure parents know who their child's key person is and that key persons meet the emotional needs of children effectively	29/12/2023
train staff to manage children's behaviour in a more effective way	29/12/2023
ensure staff are well deployed to ensure children's safety and well-being	29/12/2023
support staff practice further through effective supervision meetings and ongoing coaching	29/12/2023
ensure leaders develop their understanding of their roles for oversight of the setting and identify breaches in requirements	29/12/2023
improve teaching and plan a challenging and enjoyable experience for each child in all areas of learning and development.	29/12/2023

Setting details

Unique reference number	2658200
Local authority	Havering
Inspection number	10315004
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register
Day care type	Sessional day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	2 to 5
Total number of places	30
Number of children on roll	24
Name of registered person	ALIF PRE-SCHOOLS LTD
Registered person unique reference number	2658204
Telephone number	01708371793
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

St Thomas' Pre-School registered in January 2022. It is located in Noak Hill, in the London Borough of Havering. The setting is open term time only. It operates on Monday to Thursday from 9am to 2.30pm. On Fridays, the setting is open from 9am to midday. There are seven staff who work with the children. Of these, four hold a level 3 childcare qualification, two hold a qualification at level 6, and one holds a level 2 childcare qualification. The nursery receives funding to provide early education places for children aged two, three and four years old.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Caroline Preston

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 joined the inspector on a learning walk and talked to the inspector about their intent for the curriculum and what they want children to learn.
- The inspector spoke to parents and 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 this was having on children's learning.
- The inspector observed the interactions between staff and children.
- The provider met with the inspector and discussed the leadership and management of the setting.
- The inspector looked at relevant documentation, such as suitability and vetting checks, first-aid certificates and staff personal files.
- A joint observation was completed and discussed with the provider.
- The inspection was carried out as a result of Ofsted's risk assessment process.

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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