

Inspection of Academy 4 Kids

209 Friern Barnet Lane, Whetstone, London N20 0NG

Inspection date: 22 January 2024

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Inadequate

Leadership and management

Inadequate

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Inadequate

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is inadequate

The provider does not adequately make sure that all staff follow safeguarding practices, policies and procedures. This compromises children's welfare, safety and well-being.

The quality of teaching is variable in the different areas of the nursery. In the area for children over two, staff support children to feel secure and confident. Children practise their self-help and care skills, and they learn to use the toilet and wash their hands. Staff guide and act as sound role models in their play. Children learn to share, take turns and play cooperatively with their peers. They show they understand the routines and follow instructions well. Staff get down to children's eye level and use visual cues to help them understand. This helps to prepare children for their next stage in their developmental journey. However, this is less so in the under-two's areas. While some staff engage and support children's learning and progress, others are less secure. Some staff often prioritise routine tasks over meeting children's emotional needs. In other rooms, inconsistent staff practice disrupts children's learning. For example, some children wander around, and some staff do not engage them as well others.

Staff working with older children are skilled at motivating children and encourage them to concentrate. However, some staff working with younger children are less skilled at actively promoting children's communication to help them develop their listening, thinking and speaking skills.

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

- The provider does not meet several requirements of the 'Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage'. This lack of compliance impacts their ability to drive and sustain improvement.
- Since the last inspection, changes have been made to some of the leadership roles. Staff supervision systems continue to be ineffective. Leaders hold regular meetings with staff to discuss their roles and responsibilities. Despite known gaps in staff's practice, swift measures have not been taken to ensure that all staff offer quality learning and development experiences for all children and meet their needs effectively.
- The provider does not ensure that all staff adhere to the mobile phones policy. Some staff place these in the children's playrooms, and some store their phones in their personal bags, without the knowledge of leaders. This inconsistency in staff implementation of procedures compromises children's welfare and safety.
- In pre-school areas, key persons work effectively to meet children's individual care and learning needs. However, staff in the areas for children under two are not well deployed to meet children's care and emotional needs, such as during

key routines like eating and nappy changes. This does not help support children's self-esteem or help them to form bonds with their familiar adult.

- In the areas for children over two, there are suitable and safe hygiene practices. However, this is not consistent in all areas of the nursery. For example, some staff use a container of water for all the children to wash their hands in. This poses the risk of cross-contamination and compromises children's health and well-being.
- In pre-school, staff use effective behaviour management strategies to support children's good behaviour. These children are very well engaged and motivated in their chosen activities and play experiences. However, some other staff do not manage children's emerging understanding of safe boundaries as effectively. For example, in the area for children under two, when children climb on chairs, staff approach them from behind without explanation or clear communication. This means that some children do not learn about right from wrong.
- Some staff do not adhere to known government safety guidance for safe sleeping for young babies. This compromises children's welfare and safety.
- There are inconsistencies in how staff identify risks. For example, small objects, such as beads and buttons, are scattered on the floor. The lack of effective risk assessment compromises children's well-being and safety.
- Other safeguarding measures, such as vetting processes, are in place to make sure that staff are suitable to work with children. Leaders also ensure that staff are aware of how to identify, manage and report any child welfare concerns or concerns about the conduct of staff, if necessary.
- The quality of teaching is secure in the areas for children over two. Staff are knowledgeable about what children know and can do. Teaching practices in support of children are secure and effective. Consequently, children make sound progress in their developmental journey. They are friendly and confident in their interactions, including with visitors.
- There are good arrangements in place to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Children who need targeted support grow in confidence and develop independence as a result of the support they receive.
- Parents praise staff as welcoming and caring. They report that they are happy with the feedback about their children's care and education.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

There is not an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts children's interests first.

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
take all safety measures to ensure staff's personal mobile phones are stored securely and not accessible around children	09/02/2024
improve staff supervision to support, coach and train staff and identify solutions to gaps in practice as they arise	09/02/2024
improve the deployment of key persons to ensure care and learning are tailored to meet children's individual needs, in particular babies and toddlers, to help them feel settled and secure	09/02/2024
ensure staff facilitate appropriate hygiene practices with regards to wiping children's noses and handwashing practices, to minimise the risk of cross-contamination, in particular for children under two	09/02/2024
help staff gain the knowledge and skills to support, understand and manage children's behaviour in an appropriate way	09/02/2024
ensure staff working with children under two implement safe sleeping arrangements in line with the latest government safety guidance	09/02/2024
ensure staff take all reasonable steps to identify and minimise all potential risks to children, particularly removing choking hazards.	09/02/2024

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

	Due date
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improve the consistency of the delivery of the curriculum consistently to ensure all staff promote children's care and learning	29/03/2024
strengthen the consistency of staff's delivery across the nursery of the programme for communication and language.	29/03/2024

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY260044
Local authority	Barnet
Inspection number	10327381
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	100
Number of children on roll	94
Name of registered person	AB Nurseries Limited
Registered person unique reference number	RP903539
Telephone number	020 8446 9988
Date of previous inspection	14 August 2023

Information about this early years setting

Academy 4 Kids registered in 2003. The nursery is situated in Whetstone, in the London Borough of Barnet. It is open each weekday, from 7.30am to 6.30pm, for 51 weeks of the year. The provider receives funding for the provision of free early education for children aged three and four years. The provider employs 27 members of staff, of whom 16 hold relevant early years qualifications from level 2 to level 4. There are 10 unqualified staff and one chef.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors

Seema Parmar
Agnes Wink

Inspection activities

- The lead inspector discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the provider and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the provider.
- The inspectors viewed the provision and discussed the safety and suitability of the premises.
- The manager and the lead inspector completed a learning walk together of all areas of the nursery and discussed the early years curriculum.
- Children spoke to/communicated with the inspectors during the inspection.
- The inspectors talked to staff at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The inspectors observed the quality of education being provided, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact this was having on children's learning.
- The lead inspector spoke with the nominated individual and the manager about the leadership and management of the setting.
- The lead inspector carried out several joint observations of group activities with the manager.
- The lead inspector looked at relevant documentation and reviewed evidence of the suitability of staff working in the nursery.
- Parents shared their views of the setting with the team inspector.

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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