

Inspection of Southampton University Early Years Centre

Building 41, University Road, Southampton, Hampshire SO17 1BJ

Inspection date: 2 February 2024

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good
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What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

All staff ensure that children are happy, secure and ready to learn in this diverse nursery. Children form strong bonds with staff and quickly immerse themselves in their play and explorations. They are enthusiastic learners. For example, babies love starting their day outdoors. Toddlers confidently follow all daily routines, including washing their hands before snack and helping to load the dishwasher afterwards. Children love books and avidly listen to stories, sitting close to staff. Pre-school children experiment with real objects in the sand tray. They collaboratively discuss different ways to fill and empty containers with their friends. Staff have high expectations for children's behaviour. Children mimic staff's good qualities, showing sensitivity and respect towards others.

Leaders constantly evaluate the quality of the provision. They identify the need for a stronger focus on early language and mathematical concepts throughout the early years centre. Staff are fully aware of this and skilfully support children's communication and language skills. For example, babies enjoy participating in singing songs with actions that match the words. They quickly lie down in preparation for the 'sleeping bunnies' song to start. Toddlers hear mathematical terms from staff, such as 'full', 'empty' and 'half-full' when they use spoons to fill bowls with oats. Pre-school children compare various lengths of tape measures and use appropriate words, such as 'longer' and 'shorter'. Children make good progress in their learning and development, including children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and children who speak English as an additional language.

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

- Leaders are reflective and committed to continual improvement. For instance, they create a curriculum that builds on children's natural curiosity. Children play with real and authentic objects. They have ample opportunities to practise their previous learning, such as when they make up their own games. Older children pretend to type on laptops and say they are busy working. They notice the letter and number keys that relate to letters in their name and their age.
- Staff place a high importance on sharing books with children and extending this to parents. Children love to share books they know from the early years centre, at home. They develop strong hand muscles through sensory activities that support their controlled mark-making skills. Even the youngest children show impressive use of various writing tools. Older children show great coordination as they label their own creations with their names. This helps to develop children's early literacy skills well.
- Leaders and staff work closely with external professionals to implement targeted interventions successfully. This support benefits children with SEND. The special

educational needs coordinator is instrumental in overseeing children with SEND and accurately monitors their progress. She is quick to make referrals for additional support and advice and keeps parents fully informed. Additional funding for children with SEND is used effectively to buy interesting resources.

- Staff recognise the importance of raising children's awareness of the variety of cultures and languages at the nursery. Children hear words from different languages that represent the same object, such as a car. They hold interesting conversations about the similarities and differences between the Italian, French and English words. Children demonstrate how proud they are of their home languages.
- Children learn to adopt healthy lifestyles. They have daily opportunities to build their stamina as they run, jump and balance with increasing agility in the fresh air. Children learn to manage their self-care needs from an early age, such as feeding themselves, with staff always close by. Toddlers and older children know that eating fruits and vegetables is good for their bodies. This helps children learn ways to stay fit and develop good habits.
- Leaders regularly monitor the quality of staff's practice. On the whole, they suitably support them with professional development opportunities to improve their existing knowledge and skills. For example, individual staff access online training to learn how to engage boys in more creative activities. However, there are some gaps in staff's knowledge when planning activities and the best ways to implement them with children. In these cases, the planning is not precise enough to build effectively on children's existing learning. This is particularly evident in the pre-school room.
- Parents highly praise the education and care their children receive. They report that staff keep them well-informed about their children's progress. Parents use many of the suggestions and ideas that staff share with them to further develop their children's learning at home. This helps to support children's continual development. Parents are impressed with their children's progress, especially in their speech, confidence, independence and social skills.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts children's interests first.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- enhance the support for individual staff to interact more effectively with children, and to understand how to use what they know about children to plan more precisely to meet their needs.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY258679
Local authority	Southampton
Inspection number	10305191
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	0 to 4
Total number of places	120
Number of children on roll	110
Name of registered person	Southampton University
Registered person unique reference number	RP520882
Telephone number	023 8059 3465
Date of previous inspection	14 February 2018

Information about this early years setting

Southampton University Early Years Centre registered in 1976. It operates from a university building in the area of Southampton. The centre is open Monday to Friday, from 8am to 5.45pm, all year. It provides funding for the provision of free early education for children aged two. The centre is also eligible for this funding for children aged three and four years. There are 32 members of staff, all of whom hold appropriate childcare qualifications from level 2 to level 6.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Sonia Panchal

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 leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the provider.
- The leader joined the inspector on a learning walk and talked to the inspector about their curriculum and what they want their children to learn.
- Children spoke to the inspector about their friends and what they like to do when they are at nursery.
- The inspector talked to staff and parents 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 that this was having on children's learning.
- The inspector carried out joint observations of a group activity with the leader.
- The inspector looked at relevant documentation and reviewed evidence of the suitability of staff working in the nursery.

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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