

Inspection of Whitehall Nursery School

15 Elphinstone Road, Hastings, East Sussex TN34 2EE

Inspection date: 5 February 2024

Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
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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

Weaknesses in the leadership of the setting impact on the quality of provision and outcomes for children. The provider has not ensured that staff have the appropriate recognised qualifications to fulfil their roles. The provider does not have sufficient oversight of practice and provision to ensure that children are receiving consistently good-quality teaching.

There are inconsistencies in the effectiveness of the organisation of the environment and routines. Staff do not always support children well enough in their play due to weaknesses in staff deployment. Children frequently become upset, and behaviour is poor. This significantly impacts on the progress they make. However, children form trusting bonds with staff and go to them for cuddles and comfort. Staff are patient and calm. They give gentle reminders to children, such as to use 'kind hands and feet'.

Overall, the curriculum is not ambitious enough to ensure all children are fully engaged and maintain attention and interest. However, there are times when staff successfully provide activities that children enjoy. For example, children enjoy looking at pictures of X-rays based on their interest in skeletons. Outside, children enjoy exploring the construction area. Staff support this by talking about how plaster is made and how to build a brick wall. Staff also encourage children to keep themselves safe. Children wash their hands before eating and hold the handrail when climbing steps outside.

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

- The leadership of the setting is not effective. The provider has not ensured that they are complying with the requirements around staff qualifications. In addition, they are not providing the manager with regular supervision to give them an oversight of the effectiveness of practice. However, the manager arranges regular meetings to support staff and share information about children.
- Overall, the organisation of the setting is not effective enough. There are times when staff are not deployed effectively. For example, staff are often busy with domestic duties, such as changing children and preparing for mealtimes. Insufficient consideration is given to supervising the children when there is only one staff member available to support them. Children become unsettled, and this impacts on their behaviour and emotional well-being. In addition, at times, children have access to a lot of different areas, making it difficult for staff to supervise them effectively.
- Staff show a genuine commitment to doing their best to provide good-quality teaching and learning. However, they do not have a suitably challenging curriculum for children. This, coupled with the weaknesses in organisation, mean

that children do not make the progress of which they are capable. In addition, there are times when there are not enough toys set out for the number of children who want to play, and children frequently become frustrated.

- Overall, children do not always receive the support they need to become motivated learners and develop positive attitudes to learning. However, some activities are successful and enjoyable. For example, younger children enjoy exploring farmyard animals, and older children enjoy writing shopping lists. These experiences support their developing literacy. In addition, staff encourage children's independence. Children learn to put on their coats, and older children select the toys they want to play with.
- Staff are kind and gentle in their approach. Children and their families receive a warm welcome when they arrive. Staff provide some effective support for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). For example, staff provide pictures and cards to help children communicate successfully. Children who were non-verbal when they started now develop confidence in using words.
- Staff promote children's interest in reading and stories. They provide an attractive book area and read books with children. Young children enjoy joining in with different rhymes. This helps to support their developing language skills.
- Communication with parents is effective. Parents report that their children have settled well. They talk highly of all staff, including new staff, and praise their caring nature. Parents benefit from the help and support they receive. For example, the manager has taken families to appointments to ensure they receive advice where needed.
- Staff have effective safeguarding knowledge and know what to do if they are concerned about children or colleagues. They have taken on additional training courses to support their knowledge and 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 meet the requirements of the early years foundation stage and Childcare Register the provider must:

	Due date
ensure that all staff have the required qualifications, training, and support to fulfil their roles effectively	04/03/2024

devise and implement a suitably challenging curriculum that promotes children's engagement and learning	04/03/2024
review and improve the organisation, routines, the environment and deployment of staff to ensure that children are supported effectively in their play and learning.	04/03/2024

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

- support staff to be more consistent in managing children's behaviour.

Setting details

Unique reference number	109333
Local authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	10317323
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	2 to 4
Total number of places	16
Number of children on roll	16
Name of registered person	White, Rosemary
Registered person unique reference number	RP909541
Telephone number	01424 436642
Date of previous inspection	23 May 2018

Information about this early years setting

Whitehall Nursery School registered in 1982. It is located in Hastings, East Sussex. It is open Monday and Wednesday, from 9am until 3pm, and Fridays, from 9am until midday, term time only. The setting receives funding to provide free early education for children aged two, three and four years. The setting employs three members of staff, of whom one holds a recognised early years qualification at level 4.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Victoria Salisbury

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 inspector discussed the curriculum and what they want for children.
- The inspector spoke to children, to find out about their time at the setting.
- Staff spoke to the inspector during the inspection, and the inspector took account of their views.
- The inspector spoke with the nominated individuals about the leadership and management of the setting.
- The special educational needs coordinator spoke to the inspector about how they support children with SEND.
- The inspector observed the quality of education being provided, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact that this was having on children's learning.
- Parents shared their views of the setting with the 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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