

Inspection of Little Earthworms

387 Ditchling Road, BRIGHTON BN1 6NF

Inspection date: 7 March 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

Good

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is inadequate

Weaknesses in the overarching safeguarding procedures mean that children's safety and well-being are compromised. Leaders do not ensure that all staff understand the risk assessments that are in place for unvetted individuals. Consequently, staff who are waiting for suitability checks to be approved have unsupervised contact with children.

Despite this, staff provide children with a warm welcome on arrival. Children confidently seek out their friends and settle quickly. Staff provide a range of activities that ignite children's curiosity and expose them to new language. For example, staff revisit ideas from the story 'Handa's Surprise'. They use themes linked to the story to teach children about different foods. This leads on to children making their own fruit kebabs. Staff introduce and explain new words associated to the fruit, such as 'ripe'. This contributes towards extending children's range of vocabulary. Furthermore, children learn about their friends' cultural heritages. A parent reads the same story to the children, which introduces them to the fruit names in Spanish.

However, the quality of learning and development is not consistent for the younger age group. Staff are unclear about how to plan experiences and activities that precisely align to the individual learning needs of children. Therefore, learning is often incidental and not purposeful. At times, younger children struggle to engage and become easily unsettled.

Nevertheless, staff provide children with opportunities to be physically active outside and learn about the natural world. For instance, children grow their own vegetables and look after the nursery chickens. This contributes towards children learning how to care for living things. This gives them a positive sense of responsibility.

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

- Leaders understand the requirements of the registration. However, they have not placed sharp enough focus to ensure that risk assessments are upheld when unvetted staff work with children. Consequently, effective safeguarding practice is not adhered to by staff at all times.
- Leaders know what they want children to learn and why. However, not all staff fully understand this. Staff in the baby room do not ensure that children are taught essential skills they need to make progress in their learning and development. However, staff working with older children have a secure understanding how to plan and implement a broad and balanced curriculum. Leaders recognise that some staff need additional support. They outline how

they intend to address this but have yet to fully embed the support required.

- Staff do not ensure that all children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive interventions at the earliest opportunity. Staff plan activities that focus on children's interests. However, staff do not implement relevant strategies in children's daily routines and play to address their individual delays in development. This does not help children with SEND to catch up.
- Staff support older children to understand the 'golden rules' of the nursery. This helps children to understand expected behaviour and how their behaviour can impact on themselves and others. This contributes towards children's good behaviour and the positive relationships they have with their friends. For example, children negotiate and share each other's toys and talk to one another about their play ideas. However, there are times when much younger children are very unsettled. Staff do not consistently provide the necessary support to enable children to feel emotionally safe and secure. Consequently, children become upset, which hinders their engagement in play and learning.
- Some staff are relatively new to leadership positions. Leaders carry out supervision meetings with staff to discuss training needs and set actions to help enhance their continued professional development. However, on occasion, senior staff do not offer junior staff the guidance they need to help them support children in their learning and development.
- Staff encourage children to practise independence skills and praise their efforts. For example, older children keep trying until they succeed putting on their own coats to go outdoors. Furthermore, children access a water station to pour their own drinks when they are thirsty. This helps to build children's confidence to engage in self-care routines.
- Staff provide opportunities for older children to develop their gross and fine motor skills. This includes providing tools such as brushes for outdoor wall painting and cutters to manipulate play dough to children's desired effect. This helps to build their dexterity and muscle control, which will later contribute towards emerging handwriting skills.

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?

To meet the requirements of the early years foundation stage and Childcare Register the provider must:

	Due date
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ensure that unvetted staff do not have unsupervised contact with children	12/04/2024
ensure that all staff in the baby room have a clear understanding of how to plan and implement a curriculum that precisely meets children's individual needs	12/04/2024
ensure that children with SEND receive intervention at the earliest opportunity to help them catch up	12/04/2024
develop staff's skills in providing appropriate support to children who are upset and unsettled to help them feel safe and secure.	12/04/2024

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

- strengthen the leadership skills of staff in senior positions so that they are better able to help junior staff understand how to support children's play and learning.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY402775
Local authority	Brighton and Hove
Inspection number	10317313
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	0 to 4
Total number of places	45
Number of children on roll	65
Name of registered person	Little Earth Worms Limited
Registered person unique reference number	RP910334
Telephone number	01273 243182
Date of previous inspection	21 May 2018

Information about this early years setting

Little Earthworms registered in 2010. The nursery employs 14 members of staff. Of these, 10 hold appropriate qualifications at level 2 or above. The nursery is open from Monday to Friday, all year round. Sessions are from 7.30am to 6pm.

Information about this inspection

Inspector
Sherrie Nyss

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the nursery 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 nursery.
- The inspector had a learning walk with the managers to establish the priorities for the curriculum.
- The inspector observed the quality of education during activities and daily routines to assess the impact on children's learning.
- The inspector spoke with staff and children at suitable times during the inspection.
- A joint observation was carried out and discussed with the manager.
- The inspector held a discussion with the leaders and deputy manager about the leadership and management of the nursery.
- The inspector looked at relevant documentation, including safeguarding policies, evidence of suitability and vetting checks and first-aid certificates.

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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