

Inspection of Chipmunks Day Nursery

6 HERRINGSTON ROAD, DORCHESTER, DORSET DT1 2BS

Inspection date: 31 January 2025

Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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 leadership and management compromise children's welfare. The provider does not ensure that those with lead responsibility for safeguarding manage all child protection concerns in a timely manner to help keep children safe. In addition, supervision arrangements are not implemented effectively, and as a result, staff do not receive the support they need to carry out all aspects of their role.

Children settle easily on arrival and respond positively to the friendly staff. Children behave well and recognise the established daily routines. They learn to take turns and be kind to others. Staff provide a broad curriculum that supports children to achieve and learn through their play. Children explore the play activities with interest. For example, pre-school children build strength in their small hand muscles that support their early writing skills as they squash, squeeze and roll out play dough. They concentrate well using the fruit and vegetable shape cutters and tell staff they have made a pear or carrot out of the dough. Toddlers show curiosity in their play and begin to learn early mathematical concepts, such as when they pour, empty and fill containers with dried pasta. Babies explore how things work as they push toy vehicles around the road mat or down the ramp of the toy garage.

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

- The provider does not ensure that robust safeguarding procedures are followed to protect children from harm. They do not support those with a safeguarding lead to ensure that any concerns are monitored closely and acted on when necessary. Staff complete safeguarding training and are aware of potential signs of abuse. However, arrangements for supervision of staff are not effective in ensuring that they know to follow up on all the potential concerns that they report, in accordance with local safeguarding procedures.
- The provider does not ensure that systems to oversee and monitor any potential safeguarding issues support staff with the prompt identification of possible patterns of concerns over time.
- Children begin to develop good self-care skills and enjoy exercise. Staff provide activities that help children learn how to keep fit and healthy. For example, children learn about the importance of keeping their teeth clean. They enthusiastically brush the teeth of a toy crocodile to get them clean and laugh with staff when it suddenly snaps its jaws shut. Pre-school children enjoy using up their energy rolling hoops outdoors. They learn to walk carefully across the balancing beams. Toddlers start to gain control when using the ride-on toys. Babies crawl across different surfaces, and staff help them pull themselves up to a standing position at a low-level table. Babies begin to develop their early hand-eye coordination skills as they stack cups one on top of the other to build

towers.

- Staff have recently introduced a new planning system and are currently embedding and reviewing this to give more focus to children's next steps of learning. For example, they know the pre-school children are beginning to draw and form recognisable shapes and letters. They plan activities to encourage this further, such as in their role play greengrocer shop. Children concentrate well and attempt to draw the vegetables they play with or copy letters from their names to put on their pictures. Staff also provide different tools, such as paint brushes and water, to enable all children to experiment with how they can make marks on the playground or wall outdoors.
- Staff support children's communication and language through their play. For example, they reinforce the sounds babies make and name the toy animals, such as the zebra and giraffe. This builds on babies' vocabulary and helps to develop their understanding further. Staff ask pre-school children questions to help them think and extend their vocabulary. They plan activities to support children's listening and attention skills, and they play a game showing different objects, such as a spinning top hidden in a bag. Toddlers start to use words in context as they see this toy start to move round and round. They join in counting with staff and eagerly say, 'One more time,' as they ask to see this spin again.
- Children develop their imaginations and creativity well through their play. Toddlers act out experiences and cuddle their dolls. Pre-school children like pretending to be shopkeepers and selling fruit and vegetables to their friends. Babies enjoy exploring the sounds they can make with musical instruments. Staff spontaneously sing nursery rhymes to engage and support the babies play, and they respond with smiles and laughter.
- Parents say staff are friendly and keep them informed about their children's progress. Most parents report that staff communicate well with them overall and provide feedback about their child's day. They say that since starting at the nursery, their children have grown in confidence and are more independent.
- Staff work well together to support children's good behaviour. They teach children to learn about their emotions and how they can manage these to help them feel secure. Children learn to use 'kind hands' and 'listening ears' and play cooperatively with their friends.

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
provide the necessary support to those with a safeguarding lead, and improve supervision arrangements for staff, to ensure that local safeguarding procedures are followed when there are concerns about children	07/02/2025
ensure that systems and processes to monitor and oversee safeguarding concerns are robust and can easily identify when there are patterns or concerns over a period of time, so prompt action can be taken to keep children safe from harm.	07/02/2025

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY454946
Local authority	Dorset
Inspection number	10382428
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	153
Number of children on roll	140
Name of registered person	Chipmunks Day Nursery Ltd
Registered person unique reference number	RP532064
Telephone number	01305 260002
Date of previous inspection	6 September 2022

Information about this early years setting

Chipmunks Day Nursery registered in 2012. It operates from a former preparatory school site in Dorchester, Dorset. It is one of two nurseries registered by the same provider. The nursery operates each weekday, from 7.45am until 6pm, for 51 weeks of the year. The nursery employs 25 members of staff, including the nursery cook. Of these, 17 staff members hold an early years qualification at level 3 and two hold an early years level 2 qualification. The setting receives government funding.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors

Mary Daniel
Michelle Heimsoth

Inspection activities

- One inspector and the manager undertook a learning walk and discussed their curriculum and what they want children to learn.
- Both inspectors observed children's interactions during play indoors and outdoors, and they had discussions with staff about children's learning and next steps of development.
- Both inspectors viewed a sample of documentation, such as safeguarding records and those showing suitability of staff.
- One inspector and the manager completed a joint observation of a planned activity and discussed the quality of education provided.
- The inspectors took into account the spoken views of parents.

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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