

Inspection of The Duckling Nursery

Writtle Infant School, Writtle CM1 3HZ

Inspection date:

27 June 2024 - 16 July 2024

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 their oversight of the provision does not safeguard children. Policies and procedures are not implemented effectively and record-keeping is poor. The provider has prioritised developing the exciting and engaging outdoor area. Children spend a lot of time outside in the fresh air and have access to a wide range of inviting, natural resources. They confidently scale the climbing wall and competently work out how to climb down safely. Staff supervise closely while allowing children the challenge of working things out for themselves. This gives children the time and space to persevere as they carefully climb up the ladder to the tree house or imaginatively build their own obstacle course from loose parts, such as crates and planks. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities have equal access to all opportunities in the nursery and are well supported by attentive and responsive staff.

Staff listen with interest when children share their experiences. They get down at the child's level and ask sensitive questions to encourage children to expand their thinking and talk more. This support children's communication skills and helps them feel valued. Staff provide effective strategies to give children the tools to manage their own behaviour and feelings. For example, staff suggest children fetch the sand timer to work out a fair way to take turns. Children follow instructions well and eagerly help to sweep up and tidy away when asked.

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

- Significant evidence received after day one of the inspection revealed that the provider does not assure children's safety. They do not ensure that staff apply the nursery's safeguarding policy and procedure effectively. The provider does not make sure that they swiftly act and respond to child protection concerns. They do not keep appropriate records or recognise the importance of sharing information with other professionals to help safeguard children. This does not protect children's welfare. However, the nursery is going through a period of transition. The prospective owner is due to take over shortly. In partnership with the current owner, she has made some initial changes and is committed to improving the procedures in place.
- The provider does not make sure that their complaints procedure is in line with requirements. They do not ensure that concerns are recorded and they do not inform the person making the complaint of the outcome of their investigation. As such, records of complaints are not able to be shared with Ofsted, as required.
- The provider has created a well-organised routine so children know where to self-register and place their bags on arrival. This helps them have a calm, familiar start to their day and they confidently say goodbye to their parents. There are times during the day when all children sit together for a group activity.

Initially, they show interest and listen. However, these large-group times do not meet the needs of all the children. This results in some of them losing interest and becoming distracted.

- Staff offer children many opportunities to lead their own learning and make choices about how they use the various resources. For instance, children take dinosaurs into the mud kitchen and ask staff to read them a story. In contrast, staff do not manage transitions as effectively. Children's deep engagement and learning are occasionally disrupted when moving from outside to indoors and they are asked to line up and wait for longer than is necessary.
- The provider has developed a clear curriculum and is working hard to ensure all staff are clear of the purpose of activities and what they want children to learn. New staff are still getting to know their key children and the ethos of the nursery. Staff assess what children have learned through their observations, interactions and discussions with each other.
- Leaders have established strong links with the local school. Children can regularly use the school playground, field and other facilities. Therefore, they become familiar with the school and Reception teachers, which helps support a smooth transition to children's next stage of their education.
- The provider organises regular events to increase parental involvement. Parents speak highly of attending the Father's Day gathering, 'Sewing Week' and parents' consultations. Parents are invited to an induction day with their children to get to know staff and the nursery at the start. This gives the child's key person time to gather relevant information and find out children's prior knowledge and experiences. Parents say their children have become more sociable and confident as a result of coming to the nursery.

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
ensure child protection concerns are acted upon and reported to the appropriate agencies without delay	26/07/2024

make sure all staff have a secure understanding of the safeguarding policy and procedure, in particular the procedures to follow where there are child protection concerns	16/08/2024
put in place a written procedure for managing any concerns and maintain records of any complaints, including their outcome	16/08/2024
keep accurate and clear records to share with other agencies, as appropriate.	16/08/2024

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

- review the organisation of large-group times so that all children benefit from the rich learning opportunities
- improve transitions throughout the day to make sure that children's engagement is not unnecessarily interrupted.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY535765
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10344380
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	2 to 4
Total number of places	28
Number of children on roll	50
Name of registered person	The Duckling Nursery Limited
Registered person unique reference number	RP535764
Telephone number	07359754682
Date of previous inspection	19 September 2018

Information about this early years setting

The Duckling Nursery registered in 2016 and is run by a limited company. The nursery employs eight members of childcare staff. Of these, six hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 or above. The nursery opens from Monday to Friday, during school term times. Sessions are from 7.30am to 5.30pm Monday to Thursday, and from 7.30am to 12.45pm on Friday. This includes a breakfast and after-school club. There is also a holiday club during the school summer holidays. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors

Fiona Sapler
Sarah Stephens

Inspection activities

- An inspection was completed on 27 June 2024. Information was received after the inspection that made it necessary for a review of the evidence gathered at the inspection against the inspection outcome. An inspector returned on 16 July 2024 to complete the inspection, as per Ofsted's policy for deferring, pausing and gathering additional evidence.
- 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.
- Leaders and the inspector completed a learning walk together of all areas of the nursery and discussed the early years curriculum. Staff spoke to the inspector at appropriate times during the inspection.
- The inspector observed the quality of education being provided, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact that this was having on children's learning.
- Leaders and the inspector carried out a joint observation of an activity and discussed the intent and impact.
- Parents shared their views of the nursery with the inspector.
- Leaders showed the inspector documentation to demonstrate staff suitability.

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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