

Inspection of The Friendly Fish Nursery

5 Selborne Place, Selborne Road, Littlehampton BN17 5NH

Inspection date: 10 May 2024

Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
The quality of education	Inadequate
Behaviour and attitudes	Inadequate
Personal development	Inadequate
Leadership and management	Inadequate
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not applicable

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is inadequate

There are significant weaknesses at this nursery. Some staff do not receive inductions or tailored support, training and coaching to help them meet the needs of children. This means staff have significant gaps in their knowledge about how to plan and implement an effective curriculum for children. Furthermore, staff have gaps in their knowledge about child protection issues and how to respond appropriately to keep children safe. This directly impacts on the quality of care and education afforded to children in their earliest years.

Despite the weaknesses, staff offer warm and sensitive care to help children settle at the nursery. They work hard to foster positive relationships with the children, which helps to develop secure attachments. As such, most of the time, children demonstrate they are happy and secure as they explore the play spaces set up for them. However, there are times when some rooms appear to be chaotic, with inconsistencies in staff practice that mean children are not given clear direction in activities or routines. Consequently, their learning is often disrupted, and this directly impacts on children's ability to sustain concentration and apply themselves to purposeful learning.

Staff make good use of the large outdoor play area to provide opportunities for all children to develop their physical skills in a variety of ways. This includes using resources such as wooden planks and tyres for obstacle courses to support children to practise their balancing skills. Furthermore, staff take children on visits in the local community and beach to support children's learning about the natural world.

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

- The new manager recognises the provision's strengths and weaknesses. However, as she is so new in post, she has not yet been able to address all the current and historic practice issues she has inherited. Despite this, she is clear about taking steps to put matters right. The manager demonstrates a clear commitment to taking the relevant action required to embed and drive improvement so children and families receive good-quality childcare.
- Staff do not receive the required induction and subsequent training needed to help them understand how they can fulfil their roles and responsibilities effectively. For example, staff are unclear about child protection issues and who they are to report their concerns to in line with local procedures. This does not safeguard children effectively.
- Supervision arrangements for staff are ineffective. They do not accurately identify individual training and coaching needs to give staff the support they need so their practice continually improves. For instance, some staff have very limited knowledge about the educational programmes they must deliver to

support children's learning and development. Consequently, activities are often generalised for children, without clear learning intentions. As a result, children are confused and lose interest in what they are intended to learn and why.

- The key-person approach is inconsistent. This is due to some staff being given this responsibility without being equipped with the knowledge and skills required to fulfil all aspects of this role. Staff do not know how to plan and implement a broad and balanced sequential curriculum. Consequently, children receive a narrowed curriculum offer that does not align to their age and stage of development.
- There are inconsistencies in the levels of support some children receive, particularly children who have been identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities. For instance, staff do not know about or implement support plans for children who are non-verbal. Staff do not robustly embed alternative ways to support these children to be able to communicate so they can express their wants and needs. This does not help children to catch up.
- Periodically, the daily routine and activities can appear chaotic and disorganised. This directly impacts on children's learning experiences and behaviours. Staff do not consistently have good oversight of what all children are doing. This leads to children, who initially collaborate well in their play, losing interest in their activities. They wander off, escalating noise and disruption. Children themselves say that the room is too loud for them so they cannot listen to a story. This does not help children to prepare well for their next stage of education.
- Parents comment favourably about the staff and how they work closely with their children to build their confidence so they are happy to attend nursery. Parents recognise there has been a lot of change at the nursery, but they feel that management and staff are responsive to their questions and queries and have no concerns. However, while staff offer general feedback, parents do not always receive enough information about the progress their children are making and what they are focusing on currently. Furthermore, staff do not seek all the information from parents that is relevant to help them understand their cultural heritage. As such, details about what makes children unique are not considered, to tailor the care and support required to help their learning.

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, the provider must:

	Due date
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improve all staff's understanding of child protection matters and how to raise concerns to agencies with statutory responsibilities in line with local procedures	01/07/2024
ensure all staff receive induction and effective relevant subsequent training to help them understand their roles and responsibilities	01/07/2024
ensure the curriculum is precisely planned and implemented to meet the individual needs and development stage of each child	01/07/2024
improve staff supervision arrangements to address gaps in professional knowledge and offer specific coaching and support to help raise practice	01/07/2024
take steps to strengthen staff's understanding of the role of the key person to help ensure that every child's individual needs are known and met continuously	01/07/2024
ensure staff consistently implement support plans for children identified with special educational needs and/or disabilities to help them make consistent progress	01/07/2024
improve the organisation of routines and activities so staff are clear about what they intend to deliver and why	01/07/2024
ensure parents and carers receive tailored feedback about their own child's specific progress and current learning.	01/07/2024

Setting details

Unique reference number	2727667
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	10347330
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 5
Total number of places	61
Number of children on roll	152
Name of registered person	Barnkids Limited
Registered person unique reference number	RP524111
Telephone number	07713324283
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

The Friendly Fish Nursery re-registered in 2023 and was bought out by another company in February 2024. The nursery employs 18 staff, 11 of whom hold an appropriate qualification at level 2 and 3. The nursery is open each weekday, from 8am till 6pm, all year round. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Sherrie Nyss

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 inspector conducted a learning walk with the manager to establish the priorities for the curriculum.
- The inspector observed the quality of education during activities and daily routines to assess the impact that this has on children's learning.
- The inspector spoke with staff and children at suitable times during the inspection.
- A joint observation was completed and discussed with the manager.
- The inspector held a discussion with the area manager and nursery manager in relation to the leadership and management of the nursery.
- The inspector looked at relevant documentation, such as 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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