

Inspection of ME Montessori Play School

Bedgrove Community Centre, Ambleside, Aylesbury HP21 9TT

Inspection date: 20 June 2025

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education

Inadequate

Behaviour and attitudes

Inadequate

Personal development

Inadequate

Leadership and management

Inadequate

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is inadequate

Leadership and management have significant weaknesses that compromise children's welfare and education. Leaders do not follow robust safeguarding procedures or act on potential concerns when they occur. This does not adequately ensure children's safety. Furthermore, key-person arrangements are ineffective in ensuring that each child's care and learning are tailored to meet their individual needs. Some children, including those new to the setting, remain unsettled or wander around with little interest in what is on offer. Staff do not ensure that all parents are informed about the identity of their child's key person. As a result, there is a lack of effective communication between home and the setting. This impacts on the continuity in children's learning and development.

The curriculum is not ambitious or designed with a clear structure to support all children's ongoing progress. Staff do not fully understand the intent of what they want each child to learn. Their delivery is more generic rather than meaningful or targeted. Leaders do not evaluate the provision with sufficient rigour to identify areas for improvements. This impacts on children's outcomes and hinders their progress.

Weakness in the arrangements to deploy and support staff have a negative effect on children's experiences. For example, at mealtimes staff often sit passively and wait alongside children, until leaders distribute children's food. This causes long delays with children becoming restless and excessively noisy. This hampers children's ability to remain engaged and focused in purposeful ways.

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

- Leader's self-evaluation has not been effective in identifying breaches of the statutory requirements of the early years foundation stage framework. Staff demonstrate some understanding of the signs of potential abuse and know how to report concerns about a child's welfare or an adult allegation. However, leaders with designated safeguarding lead roles are unclear about their responsibilities, including the procedures to follow to escalate any concerns that have been reported to them to the appropriate agencies. This does not adequately promote children's safety and welfare.
- Leaders have insufficient oversight of the quality of the provision to identify and address areas for improvement. Although, they have some awareness of staff's strengths and areas for development, leaders do not offer personalised development programmes or hold regular supervision meetings with individual staff to discuss their performance. Consequently, staff are not supported to improve their practice or deepen their understanding of child development. This does not help to provide children with good enough learning experiences.

- Although elements of a key-person system are in place, this is not sufficiently developed to ensure that staff build secure, nurturing relationships that meet children's individual care needs. For instance, key persons allocated to children new to the setting, do not always support their well-being effectively. Often, these children are hesitant to seek comfort or reassurance. While some staff form stronger bonds and are approached more readily by children, this is not consistent across the provision.
- Communication with parents is inconsistent. Staff do not inform parents of who is responsible for planning their child's learning, who they can build positive, trusting relationships with or who to approach for progress updates. It is typically leaders who relay some information about their children to parents at the beginning and end of the day. However, parents do not receive precise details about their child's development, next steps in learning or suggestions of ways they can support learning at home. Consequently, this impacts on the effectiveness of collaborative working between home and the setting to support children's progress.
- Leaders complete the curriculum planning. However, they do not routinely liaise with the staff who know the children best to ensure that activities reflect children's developmental stages. Although some children engage happily and independently in activities, staff do not always capture children's focus or extend their learning with high-quality interactions. This leads to some children becoming disinterested and disengaged. Even though children are capable, the ineffective teaching has an impact on their overall achievement.
- Despite weaknesses, there are some positive aspects. Leaders have been working with early years advisers to address actions identified at the last inspection. For example, some children are developing independence in their self-care skills, as they spread butter with a knife on their crackers at snack time and wash their dishes in washing up bowls. Babies learn to play cooperatively, such as when they pretend to drink 'cups of tea' at a make-believe 'picnic'. At times, some older children show an understanding of right and wrong. For instance, they waiting patiently for their turn when they want the same toy.

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?

The provision is inadequate and Ofsted intends to take enforcement action.

We will issue a Welfare Requirements Notice requiring the provider to:

	Due date
ensure designated safeguarding leads fully understand their responsibility to implement robust safeguarding policies and procedures, in line with the local safeguarding partnership	07/07/2025
develop rigorous arrangements for the professional development of staff, including effective ongoing supervision and support, and provide the coaching and training needed to enable staff to consistently promote the interests of children	14/07/2025
ensure every child is assigned a key person, including when children first start at the setting, to meet their individual needs and to support their emotional well-being	14/07/2025
improve the arrangements to share information with parents, including the name of their child's key person and regular updates of their child's progress and how they can support learning at home.	14/07/2025

To meet the requirements of the early years foundation stage, the provider must:

	Due date
plan and deliver a broad, ambitious and coherent curriculum that builds on children's existing knowledge, skills and capabilities.	21/07/2025

Setting details

Unique reference number	2756910
Local authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	10374325
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 4
Total number of places	40
Number of children on roll	28
Name of registered person	Antonazzo, Kellie
Registered person unique reference number	2756908
Telephone number	07754055317
Date of previous inspection	24 October 2024

Information about this early years setting

ME Montessori Play School registered in 2024 and operates from Bedgrove Community Centre in Aylesbury. The playschool broadly follows the Montessori approach. The playschool employs five members of childcare staff. Of these, four hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 and above. The playschool is open all year round. On Monday and Tuesday, it operates from 8.15am until 3.15pm and Thursday and Friday from 8.15am to 12.15pm. The playschool also opens on the last three Wednesdays of each month from 8.15am until 3.15pm. It receives funding to provide free early education for children aged two years.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Sonia Panchal

Inspection activities

- The inspection started on 17 June 2025. It was paused in line with 'Ofsted inspections and visits: Deferring, pausing and gathering additional evidence policy'. Inspectors returned on 20 June 2025 to complete the inspection.
- The inspector viewed the play school and discussed the safety and suitability of the premises.
- The manager and the inspector discussed how they organise their early years provision, including the aims and rationale for their early years curriculum.
- Children spoke with the inspector during the inspection.
- The inspector talked to staff at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The inspector observed the quality of education being provided, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact that this was having on children's learning
- The inspector and the manager carried out a joint observation of a group activity.
- Parents shared their views of the playschool with the inspector.
- The inspector looked at relevant documentation and reviewed evidence of the suitability of staff working in the setting.

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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