

Inspection of Learn and Grow Childcare

62-63 Merrick House, Whale Avenue, Reading RG2 0GX

Inspection date:

19 September 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

The provider has been unable to recruit and maintain a stable staff team and this has a detrimental impact on both the quality of the provision and the experiences of children and their families. Staff are unable to plan, implement and embed the curriculum effectively due to staffing arrangements. Children's safety is compromised because safeguarding arrangements are weak. Children do not consistently have a key person caring for them who knows them and their needs well enough. These inconsistencies mean that parents do not know who is caring for their children, and children do not benefit from forming close attachments with a key person.

Children arrive calmly at the nursery and are greeted warmly by staff. They show initial enthusiasm for the limited activities and resources on offer. However, weaknesses in staff's teaching skills hinder their ability to develop children's interests and deliver meaningful learning. Much of what children show they know and can do cannot be attributed to their time at nursery. The weaknesses in the quality of teaching, as well as gaps in some staff's understanding of their role, impacts on all children's progress. This includes children who may require additional support to make the progress of which they are capable. Staff have a poor knowledge and understanding of the curriculum. They do not know the learning intentions behind activities. Staff do not support children's next steps in learning appropriately, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and children who speak English as an additional language.

Children show an interest in books and stories. Some children will pick up books and look at them independently. However, when staff read to them at story time, some children want to listen and sit patiently, while others are disengaged and talk to their friends. Rather than engaging all children effectively, staff accept that children will walk away and leave the story session. This does not create an environment where children learn and achieve all that they are capable of.

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

- Leaders have failed to meet the requirements of the early years foundation stage. This failure has a significant impact on the safety, well-being and learning of children. Leaders do not ensure staff understand a broad range of safeguarding matters.
- Unforeseen circumstances have led to further changes to the leadership. Frequent staff changes and recruitment challenges have resulted in ineffective leadership and a decline in standards. For example, the safeguarding policy is out of date and does not include the named designated safeguarding leads. This means that staff do not have the correct information to report concerns.

- Staff have gaps in safeguarding knowledge, and leaders show poor regard to their responsibilities. Staff do not have an up-to-date understanding of child protection legislation or government guidance, including the 'Prevent' duty. Failings in safeguarding mean children's safety cannot be assured.
- The quality of teaching is poor. Staff do not understand what they want children to learn and fail to implement a curriculum that challenges them or meets their individual needs. Although children explore sensory materials, staff do not build on these experiences to extend their learning. As a result, children are not well prepared for their next stage in learning.
- Staff do not recognise how high noise levels can affect children's communication and language development. For example, in the baby room, loud music plays continuously throughout the day. Staff do not adjust the noise levels during activities, which affects young children's learning.
- Leaders do not have effective systems to monitor staff performance and identify training needs. As a result, staff do not receive the support they need to develop their skills, which impacts on the quality of care and education. Although staff say they feel supported, arrangements to improve their practice are weak.
- Staff lack the knowledge and guidance needed to support children with SEND effectively. In the absence of a trained and confident lead, these children do not receive the support they need to make sufficient progress.
- The key-person system is not fully embedded. Children are not always cared for by consistent adults who know them well. This does not promote children's personal, social and emotional development.
- Parents receive some information about their children's day. This is in the form of electronic and verbal communication.
- The provider recognises that there are significant areas for improvement. They are committed to working with the local authority to establish a stable and well-qualified staff team and to improving staff's safeguarding knowledge.

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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ensure those with leadership and management responsibility have effective oversight of practice and provision, and a clear understanding of their roles and statutory responsibilities	25/10/2025
implement a safeguarding policy and procedure that is in line with local safeguarding partnership procedures and include a clear explanation of what to do if staff have safeguarding concerns about a child or other staff, including who to report these to	25/10/2025
ensure all staff have an up-to-date knowledge and understanding of child protection legislation and government guidance to keep children and families safe, including the 'Prevent' duty	25/10/2025
implement an ambitious education programme that inspires, challenges and clearly identifies what children need to learn next to build on each child's stage of learning	25/10/2025
take immediate action to adjust noise levels in the baby room	25/10/2025
introduce regular staff supervision and strengthen monitoring systems to identify and prioritise training needs and improve staff well-being and the quality of teaching for all children	25/10/2025
ensure there is a special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) with appropriate training and knowledge to lead support for children with additional needs	25/10/2025
implement an effective key-person system so that all staff know children well and children are cared for by familiar adults.	25/10/2025

Setting details

Unique reference number	2767121
Local authority	Reading
Inspection number	10418659
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	111
Number of children on roll	51
Name of registered person	Learn and Grow Childcare Ltd
Registered person unique reference number	2767120
Telephone number	07881361041
Date of previous inspection	25 April 2025

Information about this early years setting

Learn and Grow Childcare registered in 2023 and is located in Reading. The nursery is open from 7.30am to 6pm, Monday to Friday, all year round, except for bank holidays. The setting offers government funded places for children aged from nine months to four years. The nursery employs 13 members of staff who work with children. Of these, six are qualified at level 3 and three at level 2.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Amanda Perkin

Inspection activities

- We carried out this inspection as a result of a risk assessment, following information we received about the provider.
- The nominated individual and the inspector completed a learning walk together of all areas of the nursery and discussed the early years curriculum.
- The inspector talked to staff at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The inspector spoke with the nominated individual and deputy manager about the leadership and management of the setting.
- Parents shared their views of the setting with the inspector.
- The inspector and the deputy manager carried out a joint observation.
- The inspector looked at relevant documentation and reviewed evidence of the suitability of staff working in the nursery.

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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