

Inspection of Sparrows Playgroup

St. Peter & St. Paul, High Street, West Mersea, COLCHESTER CO5 8QD

Inspection date:

19 September 2024

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Good

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision requires improvement

Children eagerly arrive and are warmly greeted by caring staff. They are happy and confident in the playgroup and they behave well. However, while the curriculum is based around children's interest and seasonal topics, they are not offered sufficient challenge to extend their learning. For example, staff do not consistently consider potential learning opportunities when planning activities. Children are interested in some opportunities provided and are keen to have a go. They are initially enthusiastic and engage, but many lose interest and move on as staff do not consider how to adapt activities to ensure all children can participate.

Staff do not consistently ensure that activities provided have a sharp focus on what the children need to learn next, which has an impact on their progress. However, while there are some weaknesses in children's learning, the staff are very patient, attentive and nurturing. They speak respectfully to the children who have established trusting bonds with their key person. Children form friendships and are kind to one another. They understand the routines and expectations in place which help them settle and feel secure. They behave well and are very polite.

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

- The team talk knowledgeably of the children in their care, including those who require additional support, and take time getting to know them and their family. The team plan the curriculum based on children's interests. However, they do not have clear intent about what they want individual children to learn. Therefore, while children enjoy some activities, these are not always appropriate, challenging or inspiring for their learning.
- Some staff lack knowledge about how to help children build on the key skills they need to support their future learning. For example, children are not consistently encouraged to have a go and write their name on their creations. While younger children show curiosity making patterns with glue this is not encouraged or supported therefore, they lose interest quickly, moving on to something else.
- Children thoroughly enjoy their time outdoors. They run and climb and enjoy fresh air and exercise. They have fun as they pour water through drain pipes. Staff use some simple mathematical language as they encourage children to count the scoops and talk about the pots being empty or full. Children make marks on the floor using chunky chinks. They make attempts at cooking dinner in the mud kitchen. However, a lack of resources, such as mud, sand or compost, means that children cannot follow through with their ideas.
- Parents speak highly of the playgroup. They say their children are happy and settled. They comment positively about the welcoming friendly staff and the support their children receive. Parents say they feel reassured their children

make progress, have fun and are safe.

- Children's speech and language is supported well. Staff introduce new words to develop their vocabulary. They engage children in conversations and encourage children to think and recall past experiences. For example, they learn about red crabs that live in Australia. Staff encourage children to share their own experiences of crabbing on the jetty and make comparisons.
- Children learn the importance of keeping safe and healthy through everyday routines. For example, washing hands before eating. They enjoy a range of healthy fruits for snack as they sit and chat with their friends.
- Young children are settled. They explore the activities provided and participate for a while. However, there are few opportunities for the younger children to express high levels of creativity and imagination through sensory activities or the use of resources that have no fixed purpose.
- The management team does not use staff supervision and performance monitoring systems effectively. Weaknesses in practice are not identified and actioned swiftly. As a result, not all staff have the best knowledge and understanding about how to provide children with rich learning opportunities and challenge to extend their learning. This has an impact on the progress children make.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is 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
develop the curriculum to ensure that it clearly identifies what it is that children need to learn, how this reflects their individual needs and offers appropriate challenge, to help them make at least good progress	24/10/2024
seek professional development opportunities to improve staff's knowledge of how young children learn	24/10/2024

ensure that the supervision and monitoring of staff practice is effective in providing coaching, guidance, and professional development opportunities to raise the quality of teaching to a consistently good level.	24/10/2024
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To further improve the quality of the early years provision, the provider should:

- help staff to extend opportunities for younger children to develop higher levels of imagination, exploration and creativity.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY429923
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10355461
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	2 to 4
Total number of places	24
Number of children on roll	18
Name of registered person	Sparrows Committee
Registered person unique reference number	RP530767
Telephone number	01206 384321
Date of previous inspection	29 November 2018

Information about this early years setting

Sparrows Playgroup registered in 2011. The playgroup employs five members of childcare staff. Of these, four hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 2 or above. The playgroup opens Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, during school term time. Sessions are from 9.15am to 11.45am on Monday and Friday, and from 9am to 2.45pm on Tuesday and Thursday. The playgroup provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Lynn Hartigan

Inspection activities

- The manager and the inspector completed a learning walk together and discussed the curriculum and what it is that the team want the children to learn.
- 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 manager and the inspector carried out a joint observation together.
- The inspector spoke with staff and children at the inspection.
- Parents provided the inspector with verbal feedback.
- The inspector looked at relevant documentation and evidence of the suitability of staff working in the playgroup.

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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