

Inspection of Partou Sycamore House Day Nursery & Pre-School

36 Hadham Road, BISHOP'S STORTFORD, Hertfordshire CM23 2QS

Inspection date: 26 August 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

Good

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is inadequate

Leaders do not ensure that they provide an ambitious or carefully planned curriculum to meet the needs of the children. As a result, some children lose interest in the resources they have to play with and appear bored, disengaging from their learning. The environment is not arranged to excite children to be curious, take appropriate risks and explore. Staff do not support children adequately to have a positive attitude to their learning throughout the day. Teaching does not support the learning of children of all ages and stages of development or enable them to reach their full potential. Despite having appropriate systems in place to manage accidents involving children, the provider failed to notify Ofsted of a significant accident at the setting, which is a requirement of registration.

Having said that, staff are warm and welcoming towards children. This helps children to feel secure and build positive relationships with others. Children settle well. They are confident to lead their own play and ask for support and help when needed. Staff are good role models, promoting good behaviour. Children behave well, listen to staff and respond.

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

- The provider has not ensured that staff deliver the core curriculum consistently to a standard that children deserve. Despite staff having some knowledge of what children need to learn, they are unable to put this into practice. Staff do not create an exciting and engaging environment for children. As a result, children are often wandering aimlessly, not knowing what to explore next.
- Staff do not have the necessary knowledge to accurately track the development of the younger children at the setting. Although staff do monitor children's progress, generalised assumptions are made. Therefore, children's individualised progress is not monitored or supported. Progress data is shared with parents. Parents are not, however, consistently provided with ideas about how they can continue their child's learning and development at home.
- Deployment of staff is not effective. On occasion, when staff are focused on the needs of some of the children, they do not maintain supervision of the whole group. For example, while focused on supporting tired children, staff are not aware of children taking food from each other's plates. Supervision of younger children while eating is poor. However, for older children, mealtimes are sociable times. Children proudly talk to staff about their recent weekend activities and staff listen intently. This gives children a sense of worth.
- Arrangements for key persons are in place. However, leaders do not always deploy staff effectively to support their key children. For example, children returning from holiday are not supported by their key person. This has an impact

on the emotional well-being of children. Within the pre-school room, staff confidently talk about their co-workers' key children as they do their own. This provides good consistency for the older children at the setting.

- Staff state that they feel well supported by the leadership team within the setting. Training plans are in place. However, they are not specific to the individual needs of each member of the staff team. As a result, this is not effective. The leadership team provides consistent supervision for staff where children's progress and staff well-being are discussed. However, these discussions do not always tackle the training needs of the staff.
- Parents feel their partnerships with the setting are effective. They talk of the friendly and welcoming staff team and environment. There is a consistent staff team. Parents are aware of who their child's key person is and there are always opportunities for parents to talk to the staff team. Required development check formats are currently being updated to provide more information for parents. This will support parent's knowledge of their child's areas for development. Some parents, however, are concerned about the lack of challenging activities their child has access too.

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
devise and implement an effective curriculum and ensure staff understand how to plan activities that build upon what children already know and can do	26/02/2026
ensure that effective strategies are in place to track children's progress accurately and identify appropriate next steps in their learning and development	26/02/2026
improve staff deployment to ensure children's needs are consistently met and they are kept safe	20/12/2025

implement effective procedures for staff supervision to help them understand their roles and responsibilities and to improve the quality of education for all children	26/02/2026
provide staff with the support, training and mentoring they need to implement high-quality learning opportunities for children.	26/02/2026

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY460413
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10405135
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	72
Number of children on roll	103
Name of registered person	Sycamore House Day Nursery Limited
Registered person unique reference number	RP903458
Telephone number	01279465097
Date of previous inspection	3 February 2022

Information about this early years setting

Sycamore House Day Nursery registered in 2013 and is situated in Bishop's Stortford, Hertfordshire. The nursery employs 34 members of childcare staff. Of these, 23 hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 2 or above. The nursery opens from Monday to Friday all year round. Sessions are from 7.30am to 6.30pm. The setting offers government funded childcare for children aged from nine months to four years.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Lisa Smith

Inspection activities

- We carried out this inspection as a result of a risk assessment, following information we received about the provider.
- Leaders joined the inspector on a learning walk and talked to the inspector about their curriculum and what they want children to learn.
- The inspector talked to staff at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The inspector spoke with the leadership team about the leadership and management of the setting.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation with the manager.
- Parents shared their views of the setting 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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