

Inspection of 'Little Thinkers' at New Horizons Portsmouth

Isambard Brunel Junior School, Wymering Road, Portsmouth, Hampshire PO2 7HX

Inspection date:

11 March 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

Weaknesses in leadership and management affect children's safety and well-being. Leaders do not have effective oversight of the nursery. For example, they do not do enough to ensure that the environment remains safe at all times. Although risk assessments are completed, they are not effective. For instance, when there are issues, such as children being unsupervised in areas that are not safe and out of staff's sight and/or hearing, swift action is not taken. Furthermore, leaders are not always clear on how many children are in each area. This means that there are times when ratios are not met, and staff deployment is not consistently effective. This does not safeguard children.

Staff plan activities that have clear links to the curriculum intentions, such as supporting children's physical development, developing their social skills and encouraging them to be confident communicators. Children show excitement and positive attitudes to learning, such as when choosing songs and rhymes to sing. However, children who speak English as an additional language and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), do not always benefit from meaningful and effectively planned activities that support them in their development, which impacts their behaviour and attitudes to learning. There are significant inconsistencies in the quality of education that children receive. While most children benefit from a generally effective curriculum that supports their learning, the quality of education for children with SEND is not good enough.

Overall, children arrive happy and enjoy their time at nursery. They benefit from the warm and welcoming environment that the staff team provide. Generally, staff tailor settling-in procedures to meet each child's individual needs. For example, staff follow babies' routines from home to support their transition into nursery. Staff teach children how to share, take turns and play cooperatively together. For instance, children patiently wait their turn to hide as they play hide and seek. This helps children to develop secure attachments, behave well and feel settled at nursery.

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

- The lack of oversight by the provider and leaders has led to weaknesses in the safety of the provision. Although leaders complete daily risk assessments they are not effective, as they do not identify all risks in the environment. For example, children are able to have unsupervised access to a kitchen area. Although this had been brought to the attention of leaders, they did nothing to secure the area. Furthermore, in a toilet used by children, there are cleaning products left within their reach. This demonstrates significant weaknesses in assessing and managing risks and compromises children's safety.

- Leaders do not ensure that ratios are consistently met. For instance, on arrival there were not sufficient staff to meet ratio requirements for babies or older children. Furthermore, leaders do not ensure children are adequately supervised at all times to keep them safe. For example, children access the bathroom unsupervised through a heavy door, which some children struggle to open by themselves. In addition, they go through the communal area and down a corridor to the bathroom, which means they are out of sight and/or hearing of staff. This does not ensure children's safety and welfare.
- The provision for children with SEND is not effective. Some staff recognise where children have delays in their development. However, leaders do not ensure that timely assessments are completed and do not prioritise making referrals. Individual plans to support children are not followed consistently. For example, children with SEND spend a considerable amount of time wandering around aimlessly. They have limited staff interaction and are not supported to engage in the activities on offer. This is mainly due to staff deployment impacting their availability to meet the needs of the children. As a result, children with SEND receive inconsistent support in their development.
- Leaders have developed a well-sequenced curriculum that staff have a clear understanding of and implement well. Staff plan purposeful learning opportunities, that support children who do not have SEND. However, the leader's ineffective deployment of staff impacts the quality of interactions, teaching and engagement with children. For instance, at times staff are too busy completing tasks and trying to manage the room, to be able to support the children to engage in purposeful play and learning. This impacts children's behaviour and attitudes towards learning and does not consistently support their development.
- Staff ensure children have daily opportunities to hear stories and sing songs, to support their developing language skills. For example, children concentrate well, happily join in with words and use puppets, when listening to familiar stories. They engage in conversations with each other and staff. In addition, staff respond to babies' babbles and use single words to name objects for babies to hear and mimic. However, support for children who speak English as an additional language is less effective. For instance, children have limited opportunities to use or hear their home languages in their play and learning. In addition, staff do not always know the relevant information about children who speak English as an additional language. This does not consistently support children's learning and development.
- Although there are concerns about the safety of the environment, leaders and staff demonstrate a secure safeguarding knowledge. They know how to make a referral about a child, or an adult, and they are aware of the signs and symptoms of abuse. For example, they understand what action they need to take if they have a concern about children's welfare and know how to pass information on to the relevant local safeguarding partners. Leaders and staff have completed safeguarding training and complete regular updates to keep their knowledge current.
- Leaders have introduced a new, effective system to provide staff with regular supervisions. They support staff's continued professional development well, such

as providing regular team training and training to meet individual needs. Staff comment that they feel supported and have opportunities to discuss their well-being.

- Staff are sensitive when following children's care routines. For instance, they talk to babies while changing their nappies and comfort them while settling them off to sleep. This supports babies' well-being.
- Staff form professional relationships with parents. Some staff know their key children well and can discuss their interests, progress and next steps. They regularly share information with parents, for example, through electronic systems and at parent meetings. This helps parents to find out about their children's learning and helps them to know how to support their children at home.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are 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
improve oversight and governance of the provision, especially in regard to risk assessments, to ensure leaders identify and address potential hazards to minimise the risk of harm to children	25/03/2025
ensure staff-to-child ratios are met and staff are deployed effectively, so that children remain within sight and/or hearing at all times and within sight and hearing when eating	25/03/2025
ensure effective arrangements are in place to support children with SEND, that include making timely assessments and referrals, to ensure their individual needs are met in line with the SEND code of practice.	25/03/2025

To further improve the quality of the early years provision, the provider should:

- strengthen support for children who speak English as an additional language to support their development.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY295936
Local authority	Portsmouth
Inspection number	10378634
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	60
Number of children on roll	145
Name of registered person	Little Thinkers Pre-School & Nursery
Registered person unique reference number	RP525109
Telephone number	03333602261
Date of previous inspection	22 January 2020

Information about this early years setting

'Little Thinkers' at New Horizons Portsmouth, previously called Izzies Nursery, registered in 2004. The nursery is located on the same site at New Horizons Primary School, previously Isambard Brunel Junior School, Portsmouth. The nursery is open from 8am to 6pm, Monday to Friday, all year round. It employs 24 members of staff, 14 of whom have level 3 or above early years qualifications. The nursery receives early years funding for children aged two, three and four years old.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors

Nicole Atkinson
Natasha Jarvis

Inspection activities

- The inspectors viewed the provision and discussed the safety and suitability of the premises.
- The deputy manager, manager and inspectors completed a learning walk together of all areas of the nursery and discussed the early years curriculum.
- Children spoke with the inspectors during the inspection.
- The inspectors talked to staff at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The inspectors spoke with the nominated individual, manager and deputy manager about the leadership and management of the nursery.
- Staff spoke to the inspectors about how they support children with SEND.
- The inspectors 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 an activity.
- 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 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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