

Inspection of Picnics After School Club (Malcolm Arnold)

Malcolm arnold preparatory school, Trinity avenue, Northampton NN2 6JW

Inspection date:

24 September 2025

**The quality and
standards of early
years provision**

**This
inspection**

Not met (with actions)

Previous
inspection

Not applicable

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

This provision does not meet requirements

Staff do not have a secure knowledge of the policies and procedures to follow when reporting safeguarding concerns. The management team are not familiar with some of the new requirements of the 'statutory framework for the early years foundation stage'. This has resulted in breaches of the statutory requirements, which may compromise children's safety. For example, staff are not vigilant at assessing when children could be at risk, such as when children walk around while eating.

Staff do not consistently manage children's behaviour well. For example, they fail to explain to children the consequences of their actions when children run indoors. At times, children do not listen to instructions given by staff. That said, children enjoy their time at the club, overall. They are excited to see the staff and greet them with a smile and hug. Children are familiar with the routine and are confident to independently access both the inside and outside areas. Children enjoy being with each other. They play chase and ball games. Older children help younger children at the painting table by moving the paints closer to them so they can reach them. Children participate in the activities that staff provide for them to some extent. Young children enjoy running round the outside play area and ride on the scooters and bikes. Children say they enjoy meeting up with their friends they do not always see at school.

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

- Managers have not ensured that staff have a clear understanding of the safeguarding policy and procedures in the club. Staff are unsure about the procedure to follow outside of the club if they have a concern about a child's welfare. In addition, staff are not aware of what to do if they have concerns about another staff's practice. This does not ensure children's safety.
- Staff attend mandatory safeguarding training. However, managers have not implemented an effective monitoring system to understand staff's knowledge of safeguarding. Although staff are able to talk about some of the signs of abuse, they are not secure in understanding other areas of safeguarding, such as the 'Prevent' duty. As a result, staff are unable to fulfil their roles in ensuring children are fully protected.
- Managers have not provided staff with the support they need to understand when children may be at risk of harm. Staff are not able to identify when children may be at risk of choking. For example, staff do not intervene as children walk around with food in their mouths.
- Generally, children behave well. However, staff are not consistent in helping children to understand the behaviour expectations of the club. For example, as

young children play, they hide under a large stack of chairs. Staff do not explain to children why that behaviour is unacceptable and to help them to understand the consequence of their actions. This does not support all children to learn how to behave appropriately.

- Staff carry out daily safety checks of the environment and ensure resources are well maintained. During the session, staff position themselves carefully, both indoors and outdoors, to ensure they can oversee children at all times. They communicate with each other using a walkie-talkie system to ensure they know where children are. However, at times, staff do not identify hazards during the session. For example, painting aprons are left lying on the floor after children have finished wearing them. This is not actively identified and addressed by staff, and children slip on them as they line up to collect their tea. As a result, children's safety is compromised.
- Staff encourage children to be independent. Children make choices about their play and are confident to ask for what they want and need. For example, children discuss with staff about how they are making a 'rainbow' fish using the beads.
- Managers share information with parents through an online app. Parents are kept up to date on what their children have been doing at the club. Managers also use this online app to report on accidents and update parents on the club's policies and procedures.
- Managers have strong links with the school where the club is based. Teachers walk the younger children to the club and pass on information to the club's staff about how they have been during the day. This helps the continuity of care for the young children.

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 and Childcare Register the provider must:

	Due date
ensure that staff have a thorough knowledge and understanding of the safeguarding policy and procedures, in particular the reporting procedures to follow for allegations and concerns about a child's welfare beyond the club	31/10/2025

ensure staff identify and address risks that could affect children's safety, with regard to eating	31/10/2025
make sure risk assessments are thoroughly completed to minimise and remove all risks to children's safety	31/10/2025
embed suitable supervision arrangements to further support staff to understand their roles and responsibilities	31/10/2025
ensure staff use effective behaviour management strategies to help children learn how to behave appropriately.	31/10/2025

Setting details

Unique reference number	2752123
Local authority	West Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10365233
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Day care type	Out-of-school day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	4 to 10
Total number of places	35
Number of children on roll	100
Name of registered person	Hull, Tracey Lorraine
Registered person unique reference number	RP544725
Telephone number	07980749424
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

Picnics After School Club (Malcolm Arnold) is based in Malcom Arnold Preparatory School, Northampton. It provides before- and after-school care for pupils who attend the school. The club employs five members of childcare staff. Three staff hold appropriate early years qualifications, and two are unqualified. The club opens from Monday to Friday during school terms. Sessions are from 7am until 9am and from 3.15pm until 6pm.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Annette Franklin

Inspection activities

- The inspector viewed the provision and discussed the safety and suitability of the premises.
- The inspector talked to staff at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The inspector discussed safeguarding with the club manager and staff.
- The club manager and the inspector observed an activity and held discussions about this after.
- The inspector spoke with children during the inspection.
- The inspector held a meeting with the club manager. She looked at relevant documentation and evidence of the suitability of staff working in the club.

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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