

Inspection of Clerkenwell Mount Nursery

27-29 Amwell Street, London EC1R 1UN

Inspection date:

12 November 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

Staff provide a safe and secure environment for children. Leaders have carefully considered the layout of each room. For example, they ensure that babies have space to crawl and different levels to pull themselves up and start cruising. Children have access to a wealth of natural, open-ended resources to enable them to make choices about their play. However, staff sometimes fail to engage in this child-led play to enhance or extend the learning.

Leaders broadly outline what they want children to learn. However, they struggle to articulate a curriculum that is carefully sequenced over time to ensure progression for all children. This cascades down to the staff team, as practitioners cannot identify the curriculum priorities for the children they work with. They show a lack of understanding about the learning intent behind activities. This places limitations on the progress that children make.

Leaders have introduced 'golden rules' across the setting and bought books to promote discussion around feelings. However, staff do not demonstrate a shared understanding of positive behaviour management. Some staff offer praise and warmth that builds children's self-esteem, but other staff are repeatedly heard using negative language to manage behaviour. They fail to be specific about what children have done wrong or what they expect them to do instead. As such, children are not always supported to make positive choices.

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

- Leaders aim for a child-centred approach to planned learning, based on individual children's needs and interests. However, there have been staffing challenges that have impacted on the key person system. Staff have not developed consistently warm and secure relationships with their key children. As such, staff struggle to identify children's next steps to ensure they are tailoring the curriculum to meet individual needs.
- Staff do not have a shared understanding of what they want children to learn, and this leads to inconsistencies in practice. For example, leaders share that a curriculum priority is building children's independence skills. While there are some examples of this, such as older children brushing their teeth together after lunch, other staff blow children's noses for them, or simply leave them with runny noses for far too long.
- Staff sometimes interact purposefully with children. For example, staff in the baby room warmly support the youngest children to build a tower. They use Makaton to sign 'one more' and model counting as blocks are added. However, other staff fail to observe children which sometimes results in interrupting their play or redirecting them to activities they have not chosen. Despite this, children

do engage with the activities available and show interest and enjoyment as they do so.

- Some practitioners are strong models of spoken English and communicate with children with an enthusiastic, warm voice. For example, they encourage children to sing 'Five Little Speckled Frogs' and model mathematical language as toy frogs are taken away. However, there are instances when staff fail to engage with children to model language or promote conversation, or even fail to respond when children offer their thoughts and ideas. This does not support children's language development but also fails to teach them that their voice is important.
- Staff are not working together to deliver consistent rules and routines, with notable weaknesses at transition points. For example, babies are upset when their familiar adults go upstairs and leave them with less familiar staff. Staff sometimes promote positive behaviour, for example, encouraging children to take turns to go down the slide. However, strategies are not shared across the team to support more challenging behaviours. On occasion, this results in situations being escalated rather than calmly and appropriately managed.
- Staff understand the importance of ensuring all children are included and represented in the setting. They have invested in books in different languages and arrange events to celebrate different cultures. For example, children enjoy dressing up in African fabrics as part of their ongoing learning following Black History Month. Staff invite parents to join these celebrations and share their cultural backgrounds.
- Senior leaders with oversight of the nursery are aware of their roles and responsibilities. They have a clear vision for the nursery, and an action plan to ensure ongoing improvements. They accurately identify their strengths and areas for improvement. As such, they show capacity to improve and are committed to building the staff team and securing better outcomes for all children.

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
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strengthen the key person system to support settled relationships for children and to ensure staff understand children's individual needs, interests, and next steps in development	26/11/2024
develop a cohesive curriculum that is carefully sequenced to ensure children build on their learning over time	26/11/2024
provide staff with support and training to understand the curriculum intent and how this can be delivered in practice, including through skilful interactions with children	26/11/2024
build a shared approach to ensuring children's behaviour is managed in a consistently supportive and appropriate way.	26/11/2024

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

- ensure that staff actively listen to children and respond appropriately when they share their thoughts and ideas
- embed the rules and routines of the setting, including improving transitions to ensure the needs of all children are met at these times.

Setting details

Unique reference number	2546100
Local authority	Islington
Inspection number	10370920
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	56
Number of children on roll	31
Name of registered person	Three Little Birds Nurseries Limited
Registered person unique reference number	2546098
Telephone number	02078335850
Date of previous inspection	6 February 2020

Information about this early years setting

Clerkenwell Mount Nursery registered in 2019. The nursery is in the London Borough of Islington. The nursery is open each weekday from 7.30am until 6.30pm throughout the year, excluding bank holidays. The nursery receives funding for free early education. The nursery employs 11 members of staff, 9 of whom hold relevant childcare qualifications at level 2 or above.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Nicola Baker

Inspection activities

- We carried out this inspection as a result of a risk assessment, following information we received about the provider.
- The manager and 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 observed the interactions between staff and children.
- The inspector carried out joint observations of group activities with the manager and regional director.
- 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 showed the inspector documentation to demonstrate the suitability of staff.

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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