

Inspection of The Courtyard Pre-School

The Courtyard, Leavesden Road, Watford, Hertfordshire WD24 5ED

Inspection date:

25 June 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

Overall, the delivery of the curriculum and the quality of teaching require improvement. Staff sometimes overlook opportunities to stimulate children's curiosity and challenge their thinking during spontaneous and planned activities. This results in children sometimes wandering around with little purpose to their play. Additionally, methods used to support children to manage their feelings and behaviour are not consistently effective. Staff, occasionally, struggle to manage the behaviours of some children, which distracts them from continuing to support the activities children are enjoying.

Nevertheless, children demonstrate that they enjoy their time at the pre-school. Staff encourage children to use a range of tools, such as scissors, paintbrushes and glue spreaders during creative art activities. Children make marks on paper at the painting easel and stick collage materials onto paper. Staff encourage younger children to name animals and to make their associated animal sounds. Staff sing rhymes with the children, which supports their language development, and they share storybooks with them. Older children learn to listen, answer appropriate questions and show an interest in the illustrations.

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

- Following a recent concern regarding the safety and welfare of the children, the provider has completed an internal investigation and highlighted areas where improvement is required. For example, risk assessment procedures have been revised and window restrictors have been placed on windows to prevent accidents. Additionally, staff have been reminded of whistle-blowing procedures, and additional training needs have been identified, such as training to support the appropriate handling of children.
- Staff demonstrate an appropriate understanding of the children in their care. They complete observations of the children to plan next steps in their development. However, the curriculum intention is not fully embedded, and staff do not always build on what each child knows and can already do. Furthermore, when staff do ask children questions, they sometimes speak over the children and do not always give them time to think and respond to the questions asked. The manager and staff are also, occasionally, preoccupied completing daily tasks, such as cleaning and tidying away the resources. This diverts their attention away from the children and therefore reduces learning opportunities during these times.
- The manager and staff have accessed some training opportunities. For example, staff have attended training to broaden their understanding of children's mathematical and language development. However, this is not yet having a sufficient enough impact on the implementation of the curriculum, including the

staff's interactions with the children. Therefore, training opportunities require further evaluation to ensure all staff have the knowledge and skills to continue to raise the quality of their teaching to a consistently good standard.

- Steps to reinforce and implement rules and boundaries to support children to manage their feelings are not always effective. Staff sometimes become flustered and are not always confident when deciding what to do next. This results in children occasionally not listening to the staff.
- The manager and staff develop respectful relationships with parents and welcome them warmly into the pre-school. Information regarding children's progress is shared and parents are invited to special celebrations, such as the children's performance of their nativity play. Children are developing the confidence to approach staff for reassurance or to ask for things they need. These interactions help children to form attachments and support their well-being.
- Staff provide children with healthy, nutritious snacks, such as fresh fruit. They encourage children to sit appropriately at the table and encourage good manners. Staff regularly encourage children to drink water, which ensures they remain hydrated.
- Staff encourage children to search for minibeasts in the outdoor area. Children show excitement when they find a spider and are encouraged to talk about its features. Additionally, children have opportunities to learn about planting and growth. Children recall that they have planted tomatoes and potatoes. Staff also provide resources for children to develop their hand-to-eye coordination during water activities.

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
improve the implementation of the curriculum, including staff's interactions with the children, to ensure all children receive consistently meaningful and challenging learning experiences that build on what they already know and can do	30/08/2024

implement effective procedures to positively support the management of children's feelings and behaviours	26/07/2024
target staff development more sharply to develop high-quality interactions between staff and children during play.	30/08/2024

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

- review the organisation of routines to ensure staff continue to meet the needs of the children and support their development.

Setting details

Unique reference number	130647
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10356151
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	2 to 4
Total number of places	30
Number of children on roll	17
Name of registered person	Elim Foursquare Gospel Alliance
Registered person unique reference number	RP520159
Telephone number	01923 252336
Date of previous inspection	12 September 2018

Information about this early years setting

The Courtyard Pre-School registered in 1998. The pre-school employs three members of childcare staff. Two members of staff hold relevant qualifications at level 3. The pre-school opens Monday to Friday, during term time only. Sessions are from 9am to 3pm. The pre-school provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector
Ann Austen

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the provider received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the provider and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the provider.
- The manager and the inspector completed a learning walk across all areas of the nursery to understand how the early years curriculum is organised.
- The inspector observed staff's interactions with the children during indoor and outdoor activities, and assessed the impact this has on the children's progress and achievements.
- The manager, staff and children engaged in discussions with the inspector at appropriate times during the inspection.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation with the manager and discussed the children's progress and achievements.
- A sample of the nursery documents were reviewed by the inspector, including evidence of staff suitability.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents by speaking to them.

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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