

Little Acorns Montessori School

The Bob Williams Building, Lincoln Field, Bushey, Hertfordshire, WD23 2ES



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| Inspection date | 25 May 2017 |
| Previous inspection date | 14 May 2015 |

| The quality and standards of the early years provision | This inspection: | Good | 2 |
|---|-------------------------|-------------|----------|
| | Previous inspection: | Good | 2 |
| Effectiveness of the leadership and management | | Good | 2 |
| Quality of teaching, learning and assessment | | Good | 2 |
| Personal development, behaviour and welfare | | Good | 2 |
| Outcomes for children | | Good | 2 |

Summary of key findings for parents

This provision is good

- Staff assess children's skills and plan activities to promote their learning. Younger children use pegs to clip their indoor and outdoor shoes in pairs. Older children clip them to number cards as they learn about some mathematical concepts. Teaching is good.
- Children have a good balance of child-led and adult-led learning opportunities. On a hot day, children enjoy a variety of water activities. They use containers, pipes and funnels to transport water around and enjoy watering the plants. Children learn the importance of drinking water to keep hydrated and about sun protection while having fun outside.
- Staff are welcoming and children settle swiftly. Staff know them well and effectively organise play areas and routines to ensure children are comfortable and included.
- Children are very independent, make their own choices and respect others. They share and take turns. Younger children play with blocks and put them away afterwards. Older children choose to draw on boards and they wipe the board off for the next child to draw on. Children play well together and independently.
- The manager supervises and monitors staff's teaching and practice. Qualified staff continuously develop their skills through training and professional development. They understand their roles in caring, educating and protecting children.

It is not yet outstanding because:

- Staff do not obtain detailed information from parents about children's interests and skills at home to boost their continuous learning and support at the setting.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- obtain more detailed information from parents about children's skills and interests at home to extend the support they have for their continuous learning at the setting.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed the quality of teaching during activities indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact this has on children's learning.
- The inspector completed joint observations of activities in each room with the manager.
- The inspector held meetings with the manager and staff. She looked at relevant documentation, such as evidence of their suitability, training and qualifications.
- The inspector discussed the process of self-evaluation with the manager.
- The inspector spoke to a small selection of parents during the inspection and took account of their views.

Inspector

Karinna Hemerling

Inspection findings

Effectiveness of the leadership and management is good

Arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Staff take part in child protection training and understand their duty to safeguard children and themselves. They know the signs and symptoms of abuse and understand the steps to take should concerns arise. Staff risk assess all areas and through gentle guidance they teach children about personal safety. The highly qualified manager maintains a culture of reflective practice and skilfully involves parents and qualified staff in keeping up the continuous improvement of services for children. The manager and staff promptly link with outside professionals to support the additional educational needs of children, who are safe and make good progress.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

Qualified staff are good teachers and work with the manager to track children's progress. Staff plan educational programmes, routines and activities to narrow gaps in children's learning and development. For example, they provide children with tweezers and pincers to handle seashells with the purpose of supporting children's grip and handling of tools. Staff challenge children's skills during activities and interactions. For example, younger children explore a mystery bag and name items taken out. Older children touch and describe items while blindfolded and are challenged to guess the first letter of each item. Staff have a secure understanding of child development and promote children's learning through play. Children develop their skills at a good pace.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare are good

Staff are caring and attentive towards children, who are praised for their ideas, personal achievements and good behaviour. They work with parents to support children's emotional needs, overall. Staff effectively promote children's health, providing them with daily exercise, fresh air and plenty of opportunities to explore and learn about nature. Children help to prepare healthy snacks and during lunch, cooking and planting activities they learn about the importance of eating well. Staff skilfully support children of all ages to manage their hygiene and personal needs. Children are confident, self-assured and happy. Their well-being is promoted well.

Outcomes for children are good

Children develop skills across all areas of learning. They access a range of toys, activities and resources, indoors and outdoors. Younger children love animals, sing songs and enjoy animal stories. They visit the local farm, make animals out of modelling dough and explore ways to take toy animals out of jelly and ice. Older children show strong literacy skills. They play games using picture and word cards, learn the sounds of letters and develop reading and writing skills. Trackers show children's progress and they are effectively prepared for school.

Setting details

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| Unique reference number | EY312157 |
| Local authority | Hertfordshire |
| Inspection number | 1092426 |
| Type of provision | Sessional provision |
| Day care type | Childcare - Non-Domestic |
| Registers | Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register |
| Age range of children | 1 - 4 |
| Total number of places | 40 |
| Number of children on roll | 54 |
| Name of registered person | Little Acorns Montessori School Limited |
| Registered person unique reference number | RP910201 |
| Date of previous inspection | 14 May 2015 |
| Telephone number | 01923 230705 |

Little Acorns Montessori School registered in 2005. The setting follows Montessori principles. It employs nine members of childcare staff. Of these, eight hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 2 or 3, including two who hold a degree in early years, and the manager has a Master's degree in education. The setting opens from Monday to Friday during term time. Sessions are from 9am until 4pm. A breakfast club operates from 8am until 9am and an after-school session runs from 4pm until 6pm. The setting provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

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