

Inspection of Little Merlins Pre-school

Culdrose Community Centre, Hibernia Road, Helston, Cornwall TR13 8DJ

Inspection date: 16 October 2019

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good
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What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children enjoy plenty of opportunities to be physically active and enthusiastically explore the well-resourced pre-school and nursery. For instance, older children use their imaginations as they pretend to make 'carrot soup', mixing ingredients together in large pans and choosing a range of different-sized utensils in their play. Younger children learn to manage steps and ramps on the indoor climbing frame, helping to develop good balance and coordination. Staff are vigilant and are deployed well to make sure children play in a safe and secure environment. They allow children to explore risk within safe boundaries. For example, children carefully use hammers and nails during an activity in the outdoor area, which they enjoy.

The premises are secure, and children demonstrate that they feel safe. They have developed secure attachments to staff, who are kind and friendly towards them. Staff help to build up a picture of what life is like for each child so that they quickly establish good relationships with children and parents, to swiftly identify their starting points. This helps children to make good progress across each of the seven areas of learning.

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

- The manager has a strong commitment to continually look at ways to improve the pre-school and promote good learning opportunities for the children. For instance, the manager is seeking ways to improve the outdoor areas to build on children's interests even further. There are plans in place to visit other settings and develop partnerships with local providers.
- The manager uses effective procedures to supervise staff and identify training to support their ongoing development. For example, staff have been trained in emotional first aid to support children's emotional development and help build their confidence and resilience.
- Staff make good assessments of children's progress. They plan activities that motivate children to learn and engage children well, such as phonics activities (letters and the sounds they represent). However, occasionally staff miss opportunities during activities to extend children's mathematical learning to the highest possible level.
- All children develop a love of books. Older children excitedly ask to be read to when playing outdoors or use books to reference pictures, for instance, when carrying out leaf-printing activities. Younger children enjoy interactive stories with puppets and sensory books which help them to develop their emerging vocabulary.
- Partnerships with parents are good. Parents say that staff are 'very supportive and friendly'. The manager does encourage parents' feedback. However,

methods to gain information regarding children's learning at home, and for parents to contribute to the evaluation of the setting, are not fully developed.

- Staff respond well to children's needs. They listen to children attentively and support their independence well. For example, children serve themselves healthy snacks of yogurt, banana, raisins and kiwi fruit. Staff skilfully enhance opportunities to add challenge to everyday routine activities. For instance, older children use tongs to help strengthen and improve their small-muscle development.
- Children's behaviour is good. They demonstrate that they are familiar with the routines and expectations. For instance, children wash their hands before mealtimes and help to get themselves ready for outside play. They are confident to ask staff for help. Children are encouraged to do things for themselves, for example managing zips and clasps and using problem-solving skills to help make progress in their learning.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Managers and staff have a secure understanding of how to protect children from harm. They attend safeguarding training and have a secure understanding of how to recognise and report any concerns about a child's welfare. Robust recruitment procedures are in place to ensure staff are suitable to work with children. These are further supported by effective induction processes which help staff to have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities. For instance, staff are aware of their responsibilities should an allegation be made against them. Risk assessments help to identify potential hazards to help ensure children are kept safe. For example, staff monitor children's food at mealtimes and cut grapes to minimise choking hazards.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- make more consistent use of opportunities to support and extend children's mathematical learning to the highest possible level
- explore additional ways to encourage parents to share information on children's learning at home and contribute to the evaluation of the setting, to help drive continuous improvement.

Setting details

Unique reference number	102854
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	10069224
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children	1 to 4
Total number of places	36
Number of children on roll	26
Name of registered person	Little Merlins Pre-School Committee
Registered person unique reference number	RP904604
Telephone number	01326 562894
Date of previous inspection	22 September 2014

Information about this early years setting

Little Merlins Pre-school registered in 2000. This committee-run group operates from purpose-built premises attached to a community centre on the edge of Helston, in Cornwall. The provision opens each weekday during school term times. The pre-school employs seven staff who all hold early years qualifications to at least level 3.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Carly Ellicott

Inspection activities

- The inspector spoke to staff, parents and children throughout the day and considered their views.
- The inspector tracked the progress of two children and sampled evidence of their development.
- A discussion with the manager was held on matters relating to leadership and management, and the inspector and the manager carried out a learning walk around the setting.
- The inspector looked at a range of different documents and paperwork.
- The inspector observed interactions between staff and children and children's play and learning to determine how these support children's progress.

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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