

Inspection of Little Owls Woodland Preschool

Itchen Valley Country Park, Allington Lane, Southampton, Hampshire SO30 3HQ

Inspection date: 8 November 2019

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children display natural curiosity. They relish independently investigating the richness of their outdoor surroundings. Children make fascinating observations about nature. They match birds they spot in the trees to the species they see in nature books. Staff draw children's attention to unusual varieties of birds flying overhead. In response, children run along the ground together in an effort to see where birds have landed. Other children seek out and study the characteristics of insects crawling over plants. Staff engage well with children during play. They are helpful without being intrusive. However, very occasionally, staff do not recognise opportunities to extend the learning of older and most-able children.

Staff motivate children to experiment and to compare quantities. They provide children with plenty of resources to collect different liquids and to experiment with natural materials. Children cooperate with friends as they transport muddy water between a deep puddle and a wheelbarrow. Staff encourage children to guess whether the wheelbarrow will overflow. Children clearly feel settled and safe with staff. They are confident to voice their opinions. Children fill the metal wheelbarrow to the brim and decide that it is too heavy to push. Children demonstrate their knowledge of reptiles. They talk about swamp areas that alligators live in.

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

- The majority of learning takes place outdoors. Children display high levels of resilience. They happily play outside in different types of weather. Staff support children's personal well-being. For instance, they carry out frequent spot checks on children's clothing to see if it is damp. Staff are equipped with a good supply of additional clothing for children to use. They help children change so that they are dry, warm and comfortable to continue with their learning.
- Children establish strong bonds with their key person. They seek out these familiar adults when they arrive at pre-school and they are happy to share news about their home routine. In comparison, staff links with parents are not quite as strong. Although staff make accurate assessments of children's progress, they are sometimes slow to share learning information with parents. This means that parents are not always able to continue working with children to build on their knowledge at home.
- Staff teach children how to keep themselves safe in a variety of different situations. They remind children to display sensible behaviour as they cautiously peel and chop fruit with small knives. Staff reinforce the rules of cooking food near an open fire. They make sure that children understand how to heat pieces of fruit safely. Children remind friends to stop at the rope barrier and to wait for a member of staff before they move towards the obstacle course.
- Since the last inspection, the management team has worked hard to address all

issues. Managers deploy staff well across the site. Staff notice when children need extra help. They share this information with colleagues when they use two-way radios to seek additional support. For example, staff sometimes need to help young children access the compost toilets. Staff respond quickly to meet children's needs.

- Staff introduce print into children's daily routine in a variety of ways. For instance, they encourage children to point out food that they like in recipe books. Children carry favourite books under their arms and they refer to their favourite pages. Children develop good writing skills. They practise writing letters on boards and they proudly show their finished work to staff.
- Interactions between staff and children are generally of a high quality. Staff listen to children and they share their knowledge about a broad range of different topics. However, there are occasions when staff do not fully challenge the most capable children to keep them fully engaged.
- Managers notice barriers to children's learning quickly. They follow guidance issued by other agencies to offer children a consistent approach to care. Recent staff training focused on improving outcomes for children with special educational needs. This has been beneficial for staff as they learned new strategies to promote positive behaviour.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The management team regularly speaks to staff about their responsibility to oversee children's safety in the outdoor environment. For example, staff fully understand the need to keep children safe around water. They remind children to follow strict rules as they move between activities. Staff have a secure understanding of safeguarding issues. They complete regular safeguarding training. Staff record details of any concerns. They know how to report any concerns to the designated safeguarding lead. They recognise that there is additional safeguarding guidance available within the organisation as well as external help. For instance, staff know that they can contact the local authority for support.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- strengthen partnerships with parents to enable the sharing of all information about children's learning and development
- support staff to recognise all opportunities where they can further extend the learning of older and most-able children.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY556184
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	10087137
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Day care type	Sessional day care
Age range of children	3 to 4
Total number of places	24
Number of children on roll	25
Name of registered person	Youth Options Centres Ltd
Registered person unique reference number	RP535058
Telephone number	01794525510
Date of previous inspection	22 November 2018

Information about this early years setting

Little Owls Woodland Preschool registered in 2018. It is an outdoor forest pre-school. The pre-school is open from Monday to Friday from 8.30am to 3pm, during term time only. Eight staff work with children at different times during the week, of whom two hold qualified teacher status. Two other members of staff have attained a qualification at level 6 and one member of staff is qualified at level 2. In addition, a regular volunteer holds a childcare qualification at level 4. The pre-school is in receipt of free early education funding for children aged three and four years.

Information about this inspection

Inspector
Julie Bruce

Inspection activities

- The inspector and the management team took part in a learning walk across the pre-school site.
- Parents were freely able to share their opinions about the provision.
- The inspector and one of the managers jointly observed and evaluated an activity.
- A leadership meeting took place at lunchtime and the inspector and management team attended.
- The inspector spoke to staff about the progress children are making in their development.

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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