

# Inspection of Little Forest Folk

19th Wimbledon Scout Hut, Cottenham Park Road, London SW20 0SX

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Inspection date: 14 September 2021

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

### **The provision is good**

Staff create a welcoming environment deep within the forest and encourage the children to explore freely and independently. This allows children to develop their understanding and experiences of the world around them. Children are confident and have good levels of self-esteem. They are motivated and curious to learn new things. Children enjoy group activities where they share ideas and thoughts with each other. They sing the morning 'welcome song' and learn the importance of the forest rules. Staff have high expectations for children based on their knowledge of each child's likes and interests. Staff support children to take appropriate risks in their play.

Children are encouraged to work together to overcome challenges. As a result, children build good friendships. They respond well to the staff who help them to manage their feelings and behaviour. Children confidently approach staff for comfort and reassurance. Staff support children's play and learning, and talk to them as they explore. Children spend long periods of time doing activities, which helps them to deepen their knowledge. For example, children dig in the mud kitchen and enjoy transferring water from one pot to another. Staff give clear instructions and children know what is expected of them. Staff gently remind children about sharing and taking turns. As a result, children behave well. Children learn to manage their own risks. For example, they learn to climb trees safely. This helps to promote children's physical development. Parents speak highly of the staff and comment that their children love attending the forest school.

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

- Children are curious and show a positive attitude to their learning. Staff support children's language development well, and encourage children to express their thoughts and ideas. For instance, when walking through the forest, the children stop and look at slugs on the ground. Staff build on children's knowledge and discuss the characteristics of the slug. Overall, children make good progress.
- Children have plenty of opportunities to develop their physical skills. For example, children enjoy balancing on logs, climbing trees and mark-making in the mud with sticks. They enthusiastically jump and splash in puddles and show absolute delight. Children develop good physical strength and control of their bodies.
- Staff help children to develop their understanding of how to keep safe. Children listen carefully to instructions and quickly learn the boundaries of the setting. For example, children learn that they cannot go past the rainbow flags. This enhances children's understanding of their own safety and how to behave. This is because staff give them frequent reminders and explanations.
- The manager has high expectations of everyone and reflects on her practice.

She uses self-evaluation to identify areas for development. For example, the arrangements for staff supervision have recently been strengthened. The manager holds one-to-one meetings to support staff and develop a greater understanding of their training needs and work practice.

- Children enjoy the planned activities and experiences that staff provide, such as group song time. However, at times, during less-structured periods, children can become restless or wander. Staff do not always consider how they can fully utilise the outdoor learning environment to ensure that children are engaged in purposeful play at all times.
- Staff have warm and caring relationships with the children. They meet their individual needs well and comfort them when they are upset. Children have strong bonds with staff. They snuggle in and listen with delight under the trees as staff read their favourite stories. Staff use a range of props to help children act out and retell the story. They engage well with the children and use effective questioning to help build their self-esteem, confidence and vocabulary.
- Staff introduce mathematical concepts, such as shape and number, throughout the nursery day. Staff encourage children to count logs and sticks. They enjoy working with a wooden number board and are encouraged to think about which number comes next.
- Staff monitor children's progress and use their assessments of children's learning carefully to plan for what children need to learn next. Overall, staff provide activities that motivate children. However, the planning and organisation of some of the group activities do not consistently involve and engage all children. Sometimes, younger children become restless and distracted, and are not fully engaged in their learning.
- Children enjoy healthy snacks and meals that are prepared by the nursery cook. Fresh ingredients are selected and all dietary requirements and allergies are catered for. Due to the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic, children's experiences at mealtimes are a little different from usual. For example, children do not serve their own meals, but are encouraged to clear away afterwards.
- Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who receive funding are supported well. The manager works closely with parents, staff and other professionals to ensure that children get the required level of support.
- Partnerships with parents are strong. Parents comment on the positive relationships that they have with staff. The setting has an online system to provide parents with details of their child's progress and the care they receive when in the forest setting. Staff use this system to record observations, assess children's progress and share each child's learning journey with parents. Parents speak highly of the forest school and comment that they are well informed about their child's learning and development.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff have a secure understanding of the procedures to follow if they have any concerns about a child's welfare. They can identify the signs and symptoms of

possible abuse, and have a solid understanding of wider safeguarding issues, such as the 'Prevent' duty. Leaders carry out thorough recruitment processes and checks to ensure that staff are suitable to work with children. Ongoing supervision meetings ensure that staff's child protection knowledge is up to date. Staff assess risks in the forest environment, making sure that children can play and explore safely. Children learn how to keep safe and confidently recall the rules that they need to follow.

## **What does the setting need to do to improve?**

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

- review the quality of children's learning during less-structured times of the day to ensure that they remain engaged in purposeful play
- strengthen the monitoring of staff's performance and focus more precisely on identifying how staff can improve the effectiveness of teaching to the highest level.

## Setting details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	EY483521
<b>Local authority</b>	Merton
<b>Inspection number</b>	10138143
<b>Type of provision</b>	Childcare on non-domestic premises
<b>Registers</b>	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
<b>Day care type</b>	Full day care
<b>Age range of children at time of inspection</b>	2 to 4
<b>Total number of places</b>	32
<b>Number of children on roll</b>	45
<b>Name of registered person</b>	Little Forest Folk Ltd
<b>Registered person unique reference number</b>	RP901380
<b>Telephone number</b>	07707545913
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	11 February 2016

## Information about this early years setting

Little Forest Folk registered in 2014 and operates from a scout hut in Wimbledon, in the London Borough of Merton. It uses the nearby Fishponds nature reserve to provide a forest school learning environment. The setting operates from 8am to 6pm, five days a week, all year round. It provides funding for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

## Information about this inspection

**Inspector**  
Frances Oliver

## Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the provider received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the setting and has taken this into account in her evaluation of the provider.
- A learning walk was completed by the manager and the inspector to establish how the educational programme is organised.
- The inspector observed the effectiveness of teaching during activities and assessed the impact this has on children's learning.
- The manager completed a joint observation with the inspector.
- Discussions were held with the manager, staff and children at appropriate times during the inspection.
- The inspector held a meeting with the management team. She looked at relevant documentation, including evidence of staff's qualifications and suitability.
- The inspector spoke to parents and viewed written feedback during the inspection.

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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