

Inspection of Little Oaks At Muddy Boots

Oak Road, Penrith, Cumberland CA11 8TS

Inspection date:

5 November 2021

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Not applicable

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is outstanding

The manager and staff have extremely high expectations and aspirations for all children. They provide exceptional support for children who speak English as an additional language and children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). For instance, the manager has been instrumental in obtaining specialised help and support from professionals and bespoke training for staff to help them meet children's individual needs. Children thoroughly enjoy the wealth of exciting learning opportunities, which stem from their interests. They follow familiar routines and are highly motivated to take part in everything that they do. For instance, while outside, children enthusiastically pour powder paint into trays. Their laughter is infectious as they confidently shake it into the tray. Children explore its texture as they mix the powder paint together using their fingers. They clap their hands together with much delight as they watch it get carried away by the wind. Staff skilfully extend children's learning by asking them questions about what is happening.

Children thrive in the nurturing environment. Babies, toddlers, and pre-school children are extremely happy and demonstrate high levels of emotional security, confidence and self-esteem. Children's behaviour is exemplary. They follow the respectful behaviour modelled by the manager and staff. For example, children show consideration and respect for other children during group time. They eagerly respond to staff's questioning and patiently listen to their friends while they are speaking. Staff focus extremely well on developing children's speech, emotional well-being and literacy skills. For instance, the close bond babies develop with staff is clearly seen while babies cuddle into staff as they look at picture books together. Babies excitedly smile as they point to the animals on the page. They listen as staff name each one and ask them what animal sound it makes. Toddlers and pre-school children listen to stories at circle time and sing songs that are expertly planned for their age and stage of development. Children listen attentively and recall what the story was about, demonstrating their excellent understanding. Children are exceptionally well prepared for their future move on to school.

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

- The inspirational manager has a superb overview of the curriculum. His passion for his vocation shines through as he speaks. He understands the importance of ensuring that all children receive a broad and balanced curriculum, containing a wide variety of experiences based on their differing needs and abilities. The inclusive provision provides children, parents and carers with a supportive, flexible service that meets their individual needs. The manager knows what he wants children to learn, and he has a clear understanding of the curriculum content. This is demonstrated in staff's practice and is clearly seen in all of the

rooms. Children are at the heart of everything that the manager and staff do. Children flock around the manager as soon as he enters the room and they interact with staff with much affection.

- The arrangements for staff's continued professional development is of high importance. Staff's training links to the needs of the children in order that training achieves maximum impact. For example, staff have completed the education inspection framework and curriculum training packages. This training ensures that staff are highly skilled in supporting children's early education through their high-quality teaching. The calm and motivating leadership style of the manager and his strong relationship with staff ensures that staff benefit greatly from the coaching and mentoring they receive. There is also a strong focus on supporting staff's mental health and well-being. For example, they held a 'Be kind day' with staff and arranged for afternoon tea as a thank you to staff. An extensive selection of customised training modules linked to statutory requirements and early years practice are completed by staff. For instance, they complete specialised SEND training and early help training packages. These provide staff with the insight into how to manage children's individual needs and support children's exceptional progress.
- The manager and staff have made a colossal effort to continue to work closely with parents during the COVID-19 pandemic. Parents are clear about what the staff are focusing on with their children. Partnership working is a strength of the nursery. Parents cannot praise the manager and the staff enough. Parents feel exceptionally well supported to help their children continue with their learning at home. They explain that their children are making excellent progress from their starting points because of the support they receive. Information about all the superb activities they have completed in the nursery are shared daily. Parents particularly mention the impact that the lending library has made in supporting children's literacy skills, and how children love taking home 'Bear Chills' and adding to his adventures in his diary.
- Partnerships with other agencies and professionals are exceptional. The nursery works closely with the local authority adoption services to provide a 'prospective adopters' course. Prospective parents wishing to adopt children have the opportunity to attend the nursery to observe children's play in the different age groups and work alongside staff during the activities. This has been highly successful in supporting the adoption process for families in the local area.
- High priority is given to children's physical and emotional well-being. Staff create a happy family atmosphere and a culture of mutual respect. They make effective use of a wide range of activities and resources to promote equality and diversity. Children learn to respect the similarities and differences between themselves and others. Opportunities to engage with members of the community are highly valued. These provide children with the opportunity to learn about people who help us. For example, children enjoyed visits from members of the postal service, who dressed up while delivering the letters during the COVID-19 pandemic. Children joined in the Remembrance Day celebrations with visiting military personnel and their vehicles.
- Staff weave all areas of learning into a wealth of interesting activities, following children's interests. Babies enjoy sensory experiences, such as exploring pasta

and other hidden objects in trays. They also develop their small-muscle skills while filling containers with pom-poms. Toddlers enjoy painting and gluing activities when making pretend fireworks. Staff introduce mathematical language and build on children's vocabulary, introducing words such as 'whoosh', 'bang' and 'whizz'. Older children enjoy collecting the apples that have fallen from the fruit trees. They count how many the manager has in his hands and whether the ones on the ground are suitable to make apple crumble.

- Children's health is supported extremely well. They enjoy a variety of nutritious foods and understand the importance of drinking plenty of water. Children discuss what foods are good or not so good for them through discussions at mealtimes. These discussions are further supported during associated activities that staff use to embed children's learning. For example, pre-school children enjoy playing a matching the healthy food game. They talk with staff about the fruit trees in the outdoor area and they recall past activities where they picked the apples. Staff build on children's understanding of oral hygiene and how to be physically active indoors and outdoors.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Children's safety and well-being are highly prioritised throughout the nursery. Staff ensure that the environment is free from risk, safe and secure. There is a strong culture of safeguarding within the nursery. Regular safeguarding training and ongoing reflection at staff meetings ensure that staff's knowledge and understanding are up to date. Staff are confident in identifying signs that may indicate a child is at risk of harm and they know who to speak to for advice. The manager implements robust and comprehensive recruitment procedures. These include stringent background checks and a thorough induction process to ensure that children are cared for by suitable adults.

Setting details

Unique reference number	2534527
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	10207256
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	0 to 4
Total number of places	48
Number of children on roll	68
Name of registered person	Muddy Boots Nursery (Cumbria) Ltd
Registered person unique reference number	RP536860
Telephone number	01768 840338
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

Little Oaks at Muddy Boots registered in 2019. The nursery employs 12 members of childcare staff. Of these, nine hold an early years childcare qualification at level 3, one holds a level 2 qualification and one holds qualified teacher status. The manager holds early years professional status. The nursery opens from Monday to Friday all year round. Sessions are from 7.30am until 6.30pm. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Carys Millican

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the nursery received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and managers and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the nursery.
- Discussions were held with the manager and staff about the design of the curriculum and how it is being implemented.
- The inspector observed the quality of education, including during a joint observation with the manager, and the impact this has on children's learning.
- The inspector spoke to children about their play and learning.
- The views of parents were obtained through face-to-face discussions and written testimonials.
- The inspector viewed a sample of documentation, including staff suitability checks.

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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