

Inspection of Little Acorns Pre-School Kingsmere

Kingsmere Community Hall, Whitelands Way, Bicester, Oxfordshire OX26 1EG

Inspection date: 22 September 2021

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Inadequate

Leadership and management

Inadequate

Overall effectiveness at previous
inspection

Not applicable

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is inadequate

Although each child forms a close relationship with a key person at the pre-school, when their person is absent, alternative arrangements are not consistently effective. Children usually say goodbye to their parents at the door and staff briefly talk to parents about children's well-being. However, if children arrive at the pre-school after the usual drop-off time, the handover is sometimes not well organised. This results in staff not gathering important information from parents to help safeguard children and compromises children's welfare. In addition, children do not learn about safe and reasonable use of digital devices to help them to develop positive attitudes towards using technology.

Despite these weaknesses, the curriculum children follow is exciting and interesting. Staff place a heavy focus on encouraging children to rise to the challenge of trying new experiences. Following the COVID-19 (coronavirus) restrictions, staff are supporting children to reconnect with their local community and environment. This is hugely beneficial for their sense of belonging and helps them to develop in confidence. As children experience something new, they begin to expand on their vocabulary as they talk about their learning. For example, during the inspection, children were fascinated by their ability to make things appear bigger by viewing them through a microscope.

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

- Some disruptions to the usual routine, such as key people being absent and children arriving late to the setting, lead to staff not being vigilant in quickly identifying and taking action to ensure children are continually kept safe. During these times, staff do not swiftly identify when children arrive with pre-existing injuries and do not follow usual procedures for recording such incidents. This compromises children's safety.
- Staff know that when children spend extended time using electronic devices it can be damaging for their well-being. However, despite being aware of this and knowing that children spend long periods of time on devices at home, there is no programme in place to address this within the pre-school. Instead, staff do not offer technical equipment for children and this limits them in understanding how to use technology in a safe and purposeful way.
- The pre-school has recently changed their approach to the curriculum and the way they assess children's development. As this is still in its infancy, some staff are less confident in putting this into practice.
- Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) experience individual learning that staff tailor to meet their unique needs. There is a quiet, dark den where children can go when they experience sensory overload. In the garden, children play in small groups so they are able to learn through touching

and feeling at their own pace. Staff are swift to identify when children need extra support and children with SEND make good progress in their learning at the pre-school.

- Children take part in extra activities, such as Spanish and rugby sessions. The manager explains that children benefit from taking part, trying new things and working together in these sessions. In turn, this helps them to develop in confidence and enjoy being part of a group.
- Children behave well. They show courtesy and respect for each other and act in ways that demonstrate that they know the pre-school's rules. Staff help children to organise activities where they need to wait and take turns. They do so patiently and fairly and play together well.
- Real-life experiences help children to begin to understand about the world around them. Children accompany staff on trips to the local shops where they help to chose and pay for food for snack time. Staff take children to the local wood where they search for insects under pieces of wood and enjoy being physically active. Through caring for pets and plants, children start to gain an awareness of nurturing living things. These activities stimulate children's curiosity and sustain their interest and concentration.
- Staff create a welcoming and inclusive environment. Parents say that they find out about children's learning as staff share information to help them to support their children's development at home.
- There is a comprehensive programme of support for staff. Staff continually build on their knowledge and skills through ongoing training and the provider ensures that staff workloads are manageable. The staff work together effectively.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

The comprehensive arrangements in place to safeguard children are occasionally undermined for the reasons outlined elsewhere in this report. This compromises children's safety. Despite these weaknesses, staff undertake safeguarding training and understand about reporting child protection concerns. Leaders and managers work effectively with and under the guidance of their local safeguarding partners. There are robust procedures for the recruitment of new staff to confirm their suitability to work with children. The manager is aware of local and national issues in relation to safeguarding children. Through daily risk assessments, the staff ensure that the pre-school is secure and any risks are reduced.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

To meet the requirements of the early years foundation stage, the provider must:

	Due date
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ensure that there are reliable arrangements for organising key people during staff absence so that children's safety and needs are not compromised	22/10/2021
improve the arrangements for liaising with parents when children are dropped off at the pre-school outside of usual opening times, to ensure staff gather any information they need to effectively help to safeguard children	22/10/2021
implement effective training for staff so they put plans into action to help children to learn about healthy choices around screen time.	22/10/2021

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

- communicate the curriculum intentions more clearly to staff so that all feel confident to consistently put into practice the exciting intentions for children's learning.

Setting details

Unique reference number	2523557
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	10207037
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register
Day care type	Sessional day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	2 to 4
Total number of places	24
Number of children on roll	47
Name of registered person	Little Acorns Preschool Kingsmere
Registered person unique reference number	2523556
Telephone number	07554 615163
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

Little Acorns Pre-School, Kingsmere registered in 2019. It operates from the Kingsmere Community Hall in Bicester. The pre-school employs 11 members of childcare staff. Of these, eight hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 and above, including the manager, deputy manager and a further member of staff who hold qualified teacher status. The pre-school opens from 8.30am until 3pm, Monday to Thursday, during term time. The pre-school provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Hayley Marshall-Gowen

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the setting received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the setting and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the setting.
- The inspector observed the quality of teaching during activities indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact this has on children's learning.
- A joint observation was held with the manager.
- A meeting was held with the chair person, the manager and deputy manager during the inspection. The inspector looked at relevant documentation, such as evidence of the suitability of staff working in the nursery.
- The inspector spoke to a small selection of parents during the inspection and took account of their views.
- During the inspection, the inspector spoke to staff and children at suitable times.

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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