

Inspection of Little Oaks Community Nursery

Wavendon Community Centre, Walton Road, Wavendon, Milton Keynes,
Buckinghamshire MK17 8LH

Inspection date: 15 March 2022

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	Outstanding
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What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children start their day with big smiles. Staff greet them happily and they eagerly settle to their play. Children enjoy a broad range of exciting learning opportunities that staff plan for them. All children, including those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language, make good progress from their starting points.

Children demonstrate high levels of involvement in their self-chosen play. For example, younger children play in the sand. They concentrate intently as they use tools to scoop and carefully fill containers. They develop their hand muscles, rolling, squeezing and moulding play dough into different shapes. Older children select items and place them in wheelbarrows, which they competently steer around avoiding obstacles.

Children learn to manage their own safety effectively. For example, they make decisions about the best place to put their hands and feet, as they travel up the climbing wall. Children learn about road safety. For instance, during their imaginary play, they learn about the colours of traffic lights and how to cross the road.

Children are fully involved in nursery developments. They share their thoughts and ideas about how to create new and exciting areas to play and learn. For example, they share their ideas for developing the new greenhouse and planting area.

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

- Staff get to know their key children very well from the outset. They gather information about children's unique prior experiences. This helps them to plan children's next steps in learning effectively. Children benefit from a wide range of opportunities to learn life skills. They demonstrate this as they prepare the allotment, digging, weeding and then planting their crops. Children use the produce they grow in their activities, for example when they make and eat lettuce sandwiches.
- Managers ensure that their provision is inclusive. They recognise that the nursery population is becoming more diverse. They organise training for staff to help them support bilingual children and those who speak English as an additional language. Staff use their knowledge to provide focused group times, including activities, such as singing and story times. These give children high-quality interactions and help to develop their language well.
- Parents report that they are well supported by staff. For instance, staff have organised children's settling in flexibly during COVID-19. This has helped to reduce concerns when children have not been left in the care of others before. Parents benefit from regular opportunities to meet with their child's key person.

They say that they receive information each term about the progress their children make.

- Managers have a positive attitude to continual improvement. For example, they have implemented action plans as they have expanded and now use different areas of the building for childcare. They seek the views of staff, children and parents to help them make plans to improve further. Parents have recently provided positive feedback on COVID-friendly opportunities that staff organised for them to meet other parents and families.
- Staff feel that managers value and support them. They enjoy the range of training they complete and comment positively on the systems to support them, such as mentoring. Staff report that managers have high regard for their well-being and they feel that they have a good work-life balance.
- Managers adapt routines to minimise risks relating to COVID-19. However, they do not fully recognise times when staff could be deployed more effectively to make the most of opportunities to promote children's independence, listening and attention skills.
- Overall, staff support individual children's behaviour well. For example, they use resources such as characters, colours and stories to help children learn to recognise their feelings and emotions. This helps children to learn to cope more effectively with situations that they find tricky. However, on occasions, such as during large-group times, staff are not fully effective in helping children understand what is expected of them and why. This impacts on the success of these times.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Managers have robust procedures to ensure that children are safe on the premises. For example, risk assessments are regularly reviewed and staff check aspects of the building routinely each day. All staff have a secure understanding of how to protect children's welfare. They are familiar with the signs and symptoms of abuse and of wider safeguarding issues. Staff know what to do if they have a concern about children or about staff practice. Safer recruitment procedures that managers follow are effective and help to ensure that staff are suitable to work with children.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- review deployment of staff at routine times to help promote children's developing independence, listening and attention skills more effectively
- build on strategies already used to help children gain a secure understanding of what is expected of them and why.

Setting details

Unique reference number	141754
Local authority	Milton Keynes
Inspection number	10108489
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 at time of inspection	2 to 4
Total number of places	55
Number of children on roll	79
Name of registered person	Little Oaks Community Nursery Committee
Registered person unique reference number	RP517346
Telephone number	01908 583826
Date of previous inspection	25 June 2015

Information about this early years setting

Little Oaks Community Nursery registered in 1994. The nursery is open term time only, Monday to Friday from 9am to 3pm. Full day, morning and afternoon sessions are offered between these hours. The nursery is in receipt of funding for the provision of free early education for children aged two, three and four years. The nursery employs 19 staff, of whom 16 work with children. Of these, two staff hold qualified teacher status, two staff hold qualifications at level 5, two staff hold qualifications at level 4 and six staff hold qualifications between level 2 and level 3.

Information about this inspection

Inspector
Lisa Dailey

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the provider received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the provider and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the provider.
- A tour of the premises was carried out to see new areas of the building that are used. The manager talked about new and ongoing developments and how they keep the premises safe and secure.
- Staff talked to the inspector about how they plan activities and what they do to support children's learning and development. They also explained what procedures they follow to keep children safe.
- The inspector observed the quality of teaching indoors and outdoors and assessed the impact on children's learning.
- Several parents gave their views to the inspector and these were taken into account.

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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