

Inspection of Little Chestnuts Pre School

The Village Hall, Toppesfield, HALSTEAD, Essex CO9 4DR

Inspection date: 24 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	Good
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What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children arrive enthusiastically and are eager to enter the welcoming pre-school. They settle quickly and make independent play choices from a good range of resources. Children benefit from the warm, friendly and calm atmosphere at the pre-school. They smile and laugh with staff and each other as they play and learn. Children develop close relationships with staff, who know them well.

From a young age, children are curious and inquisitive learners. For example, in the pre-school garden, children use magnifying glasses and excitedly search for bugs and insects to examine. They find a worm and recall it is like 'Superworm' in the book they read. Children look through binoculars to watch the birds in the surrounding trees and attentive staff are on hand to help them to identify and name them. Children's well-being is a priority and they have opportunities to participate in yoga and mindfulness activities.

Children take part in a broad range of purposeful activities and experiences which support their developing skills, knowledge and needs effectively. For example, at present, there is a curriculum focus on children's personal, social and emotional development. This is because staff recognise that there are gaps in some children's experiences due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

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

- Staff know children very well. They consistently reflect on children's ongoing emerging needs and development. They carefully plan interesting activities to help children build on their existing skills and what they need to learn next. As a result, children are happy, keen to join in and remain engaged as they learn.
- The dedicated manager is passionate about her clear and ambitious vision for the pre-school. She evaluates the provision and is committed to making improvements to raise the quality of care and learning to the highest level. Staff attend supervision and appraisal meetings. They receive feedback and attend training to consistently improve their knowledge and skills.
- Children have many opportunities to practise a wide range of physical skills. For example, outside, they have fun playing on the climbing frame and persevere to balance on 'bucket stilts' to walk around the garden. Inside, they use scissors and cutters to make play dough shapes. Children concentrate as they manipulate the dough into long rolls and carefully wind them around to make 'snails'.
- Staff talk to children constantly throughout the day. They show a genuine interest in what children have to say and encourage them to talk about their own experiences. Children enthusiastically join in with singing and action songs. Children of all ages eagerly listen to stories. However, some staff do not

consistently make the best use of opportunities to support children's language development as much as possible. For example, they do not always check children's understanding of words or introduce new words to extend their vocabulary.

- Children's independence is supported well. For example, at snack time, they make their own choices from a selection of healthy foods. They pour their own drinks and tidy away their own plates. Children develop an understanding of good hygiene routines. For example, they wash their hands before eating, with little prompting from staff.
- Staff have high expectations for children's behaviour. They are good role models and treat children with kindness and respect. Children readily share the resources, take turns and offer resources to others to encourage them to join in with their play. However, on occasions, some staff do not help children to understand what might happen if they behave in a certain way. As a result, children do not always understand the potential impact of their behaviour.
- Parents are full of praise for staff at the pre-school. They say their children are 'happy and enthralled' by the activities staff provide and that their children 'genuinely flourish'. They comment that staff are 'patient and understanding' and provide them with information and advice to help them support their child's development. They appreciate the consistent contact from the manager during the COVID-19 national lockdowns to help support continuity in children's learning and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The manager and staff team understand their responsibilities to safeguard and protect children. They know how to identify the possible signs and symptoms that may indicate a child is at risk of harm. They know how to monitor and report any concerns about children's safety and well-being effectively. The manager provides ongoing support for staff to ensure their safeguarding knowledge remains up to date with any changes in legislation. Suitability checks are appropriately completed for all staff and committee members. Robust recruitment systems are in place to ensure all staff are suitable.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- strengthen staff's knowledge of how to consistently support young children's communication and language skills even further
- support staff to help children understand the consequences of different types of behaviour and the impact this can have on them and others.

Setting details

Unique reference number	402244
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10072910
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	24
Number of children on roll	16
Name of registered person	Little Chestnuts Pre-School Committee
Registered person unique reference number	RP523722
Telephone number	07901 880914
Date of previous inspection	10 May 2016

Information about this early years setting

Little Chestnuts Pre School opened in 1974 and is run by a committee. The pre-school employs six members of childcare staff. Of these, four hold appropriate qualifications between levels 2 and 5. The pre-school operates on Mondays and Fridays from 8.30am to 1pm, and from 8.30am to 3pm on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, term time only. It provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Marisa White

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 provider and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the setting.
- The manager joined the inspector on a learning walk and talked to the inspector about their curriculum and what they want the children to learn.
- The inspector talked to staff at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The inspector spoke with the manager and a committee member about the leadership and management of the setting.
- The inspector observed the interactions between staff and children and carried out a joint observation of a group activity with the manager.
- The inspector reviewed parent testimonials and spoke to a number of parents and took account of their views.

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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