

Inspection of Little Acorns Royston Limited

Icknield Walk First School, Poplar Drive, Royston SG8 7EZ

Inspection date: 28 March 2022

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| Overall effectiveness | Good |
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The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Not applicable

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children enjoy their time at this welcoming and interesting pre-school. They settle in quickly and follow the routine to put their belongings away. This helps them gain confidence and be ready to learn. When younger children struggle to manage their behaviour, staff calmly and effectively support them to understand their feelings. This helps young children to learn how to behave. Children enjoy music. They sing welcome songs and nursery rhymes. Staff energetically dance and children join in, moving their bodies in creative ways. Older children dress up and become characters from their favourite films. This helps children to develop their imaginations.

Children are developing a love of books and stories. They re-enact the plot from familiar stories, explaining which part comes first. Staff join in play, pretending to be the wolf chasing the little pigs. Staff then follow children's interest and retell the story. They include the children's names and children instinctively call out the familiar phrases at the right time in the story. This helps children to develop their listening skills. Children explore the outdoors with energy and curiosity. They balance on tyres and planks, which helps them to build their core strength. Children lift long planks and arrange them to create dens. This helps them to gain an awareness of the space around them as they move safely, avoiding others.

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

- The entire staff team is motivated and committed to their work. Leaders support them very well. They work together closely and actively seek out ways to develop staff skills. For example, when staff express an interest in becoming trained in teaching sign language, the leaders clearly encourage this. As a result, staff feel happy to work here and improvements to benefit children and families are continuous.
- Staff have a good understanding of child development and how activities help children learn. They thoughtfully select the resources that children can choose from, knowing they will experience essential learning as they play. For example, the rope swing is to help children gain awareness of how to consider risks. However, when planning adult-led experiences, they do not focus precisely enough on learning intentions that help children make very good progress.
- The staff team help children to progress in their language skills. They sign words, so that children of all abilities can communicate their needs clearly. Children look at picture cards to understand what is going to happen and can be ready for the next part of the day's routine. Staff gain children's attention first then speak to them while looking at them. This helps children to pick up social cues needed for conversations.
- Staff note children's curiosities and support them to find out more and have a

go. For example, when looking for insects, staff encourage children to use a magnifying glass to search for the creatures in the 'bug hotel'. This helps children stay interested in their self-chosen activities. However, they do not fully extend the most-able children's learning, so they are fully challenged during their pre-school sessions.

- Parents are very happy with the care at the pre-school. They value the relationship with their child's key person and say they receive a lot of information about their child's day through the online learning journal. Parents tell the inspector their children have 'come on in leaps and bounds'. They have noticed their speech and hand control has developed quickly since attending pre-school.
- The provider has a wealth of knowledge and experience to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. She guides the staff, parents and children through the processes needed to ensure that there is appropriate support in place. There is a clear vision that all children should reach their potential. The leadership team monitor children's learning successfully to help ensure they make good progress from their starting points.
- Children have a range of opportunities to explore mathematical concepts. Young children fill and pour sand as staff label the quantities 'full' and 'empty'. Staff help children to count accurately, such as when building a tower of bricks.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff have good knowledge of the signs that show when a child may be at risk of harm, including the factors that make families more vulnerable. They know how to report any concerns to the relevant agencies, so that families receive help swiftly. This helps to keep children safe. The designated safeguarding leaders understand their responsibilities to liaise with other professionals, including when an allegation is made about staff or the provider.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- help staff refine the planning of adult-led experiences to focus more precisely on the learning intentions that will benefit children
- help staff strengthen teaching, so that they further extend the learning of the most-able children.

Setting details

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| Unique reference number | 2603028 |
| Local authority | Hertfordshire |
| Inspection number | 10230351 |
| 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 | 24 |
| Name of registered person | Little Acorns Royston Limited |
| Registered person unique reference number | 2603027 |
| Telephone number | 07769646072 |
| Date of previous inspection | Not applicable |

Information about this early years setting

Little Acorns Royston Limited registered in 2020. It employs nine members of staff. Six of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 2 or above, as well as the providers who are qualified to level 6, one with early years professional status and one is a qualified teacher. The pre-school is open from Monday to Friday, term time only. Sessions are from 8am until 4pm.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Elke Rockey

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the pre-school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the manager and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the pre-school.
- The deputy 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 observed the quality of education being provided, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact this was having on children's learning.
- The provider and the inspector carried out two joint observations of planned activities.
- The inspector spoke to several parents during the inspection and read written testimonials of their views.
- The inspector looked at relevant documentation and reviewed evidence of the suitability of staff working in the pre-school.
- Children talked with the inspector 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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