

Inspection of Little Apples Day Nursery

Cunningham House, Christowe Lane, CHELTENHAM, Gloucestershire GL53 7BY

Inspection date: 6 April 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

All children develop secure bonds with their key person and show that they feel happy and secure. They settle in with ease and quickly learn to socialise with others. Staff work closely with parents to gather relevant information about children's care needs and preferences, which they use to inform their planning.

Babies and young children are happy to explore their surroundings. For example, during sensory play, staff remove babies' socks so they can feel the texture of the pasta and rice using their hands and feet. Children show good levels of engagement and make effective progress.

There is a strong focus on promoting children's early literacy skills. Staff encourage children to develop a love for exploring books. Children enjoy listening to stories and sharing books with adults. As children get older, staff encourage them to start recognising and writing the initial letters in their name. Children are gaining the skills they need in preparation for school.

During the COVID-19 pandemic national lockdowns, the nursery remained open for parents who are essential workers. However, for those parents who kept their children at home, staff offered ongoing support, such as tips on toilet training. Parents are highly complimentary about the nursery and describe staff as being 'supportive' and 'caring' towards their children.

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

- Staff provide a personalised approach to learning, where they consult children and follow their interests. Key persons use their ongoing assessments to identify children's next steps in learning. Each week, key persons have a small group of focus children in each room. They use this opportunity to observe, teach and record any key learning for these children. Staff involve parents before the focus week by asking them to complete a sheet to share information on their children's interests at home, including any significant events.
- Staff encourage children to make free choices in their play from the range of activities on offer. As a result, children learn to be independent from a young age and take risks in their play while in a safe environment. For example, children learn to climb and balance on a large tyre and laugh as they swing back and forth while holding on to the ropes. Staff watch and respond to children and encourage them to have a go.
- Children learn to develop self-care skills, which staff promote from an early age. For example, young children learn to dress themselves and eat independently. Staff allow children time to complete self-chosen tasks, such as putting on their socks. Older children use the toilet independently, and some brush their teeth

after mealtimes. Staff acknowledge children's achievements and offer consistent praise.

- Staff encourage children to adopt healthy lifestyles, including eating nutritious foods and taking care of their bodies. They offer daily snacks, such as fresh fruit and vegetables, and encourage parents to provide healthy prepared lunches. Older children enjoy harvesting own fruit and vegetables in the nursery garden, such as strawberries, raspberries and marrows.
- Staff manage children's behaviour well. They have clear boundaries and make their expectations known to children. Children are kind to others and learn to share. Staff have undergone recent behaviour training to identify the possible triggers to children's behaviour and how to use appropriate strategies to de-escalate any challenging behaviour.
- The nursery's special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) helps staff to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The SENCo communicates with key persons and parents to provide updates and share agreed targets. However, there is scope to build firmer links with other professionals to access earlier help for children with SEND.
- Staff have opportunities to meet with the manager for one-to-one supervision meetings where they get to discuss their performance and identify any training needs. Due to an increase in recent staff absences, senior staff have taken on additional responsibility. However, the management team does not always consider ways to distribute the work more equally to help ease staff's workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and staff understand their responsibility to safeguard children. They are clear about the procedures for reporting a concern about a child in their care. Staff keep their safeguarding knowledge up to date and attend regular training. For example, they are aware of a wide range of safeguarding issues, such as county lines and the 'Prevent' duty. Staff care for children in a safe and secure environment. They complete daily risk assessments to identify and remove any hazards and to keep children safe.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- strengthen the quality of staff supervision to offer more tailored support for staff, particularly those who undertake additional roles
- support staff further in developing secure links with other professionals to achieve earlier intervention for children who require additional support.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY423938
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	10218178
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	0 to 4
Total number of places	75
Number of children on roll	111
Name of registered person	Gloucestershire NHS Foundation Trust
Registered person unique reference number	RP910399
Telephone number	0300 422 2260
Date of previous inspection	10 April 2018

Information about this early years setting

Little Apples Day Nursery registered in 2011. The nursery employs 28 members of childcare staff. Of these, 21 hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 2 and above. The nursery manager holds early years professional status. The nursery operates all year around. Sessions are available on Monday to Friday from 7am until 6pm. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Shahnaz Scully

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 her evaluation of the provider.
- The inspector looked at a sample of relevant documents, including staff's qualifications, training certificates and evidence relating to staff's suitability.
- The manager and the inspector conducted a learning walk together and discussed how the curriculum is planned and implemented.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation with the manager.
- Discussions were held with the staff, parents and children at appropriate times throughout 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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