

Inspection of The Little School by the Lake

Heath Road, Petersfield, Hampshire GU31 4EJ

Inspection date: 13 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	Outstanding
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What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children settle quickly. They have strong attachments with their key person. Children who need a little reassurance cuddle up to their key person, which helps them to feel safe and secure. Children listen attentively to the warm and nurturing staff. They eagerly follow the instructions as they take part in musical activities. Children pretend to be 'ants' and 'Komodo dragons' as they dance around.

Children's language is supported well. Staff frequently read stories with them and sing nursery rhymes. Children learn new words often. For example, as they take part in scavenger hunts out in the garden, they learn about 'shield bugs' and 'blue tits'. Children make good progress in their learning and development. They behave well and staff have high expectations. Children understand the rules and boundaries and keenly follow these. For instance, they tell others that they cannot run inside because they will fall over and hurt themselves.

Children spend much of their time out in the garden. They learn to move in a range of different ways. For example, very young children learn to walk up slopes by exploring an obstacle course. Children learn to be creative as they play outside. For instance, they use mops covered in paint to create large-scale pictures.

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

- Staff's well-being is a high priority for the manager. She has an effective open-door policy and is easily approachable. The manager provides staff with plenty of opportunities to discuss their own well-being.
- Children are curious and keen to learn. However, not all staff are aware of the overall curriculum and how to build on children's knowledge further as they play.
- Staff support children's personal, social and emotional development well. They act as good role models. For instance, they demonstrate how to sit for lunch and use cutlery. Staff support children as they learn to take turns with one another from a very young age. For example, very young children learn to take turns as they fill their buckets up during a sensory activity.
- Children start to develop their independence skills from the very beginning. Very young children learn how to take their shoes off when they come inside. Older children dress themselves in waterproof clothing and wellington boots ready to go into the garden.
- Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress. Their needs are well supported by staff. Staff work closely with outside agencies to ensure that children benefit from further support. This helps them to meet their developmental targets.
- Staff introduce simple numerical problems to children's play. For example, staff encourage children to work out how much change to give as they play

'restaurants'. Children confidently solve the sum and hand back the correct 'change'.

- Staff do not always ensure that all children consistently benefit from meaningful interactions. Most-able children, at times, are more dominant. This leads to staff's focus shifting directly to these children as they extend their learning further. At times, they do not engage effectively with those children who are less confident. Those in senior positions do not always provide staff with enough supervision and coaching to address this.
- Partnerships with parents are strong. Parents talk positively about the communication they receive. This includes regular updates about their children's learning and development. They explain that they are confident about raising issues with the manager, should they need to.
- Staff skilfully develop children's knowledge of the natural world. They teach children how to use reference books to look up what they have found on their bug hunts. For example, they use a reference book about insects to work out which bugs they have found in the garden.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The manager understands her safeguarding role and responsibilities. Staff have updated their knowledge recently on how to report concerns outside of the nursery. This includes, if necessary, how to report allegations against members of staff. Staff know the signs and symptoms that may indicate a child is at risk of harm. Staff understand and follow new processes for when children arrive with prior injuries. They have a good understanding of wider safeguarding issues, such as radicalisation. The manager demonstrates a good knowledge of safer recruitment to ensure the suitability of staff working with children.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- enhance staff's knowledge of the curriculum and learning intent to ensure that the curriculum is sequential
- focus supervision, coaching and training more specifically to further develop staff's interactions with less-confident children.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY301512
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	10231252
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	0 to 4
Total number of places	60
Number of children on roll	88
Name of registered person	Matthews, Patricia Lynne
Registered person unique reference number	RP905628
Telephone number	01730 231537
Date of previous inspection	17 August 2017

Information about this early years setting

The Little School by the Lake registered in 1998 and re-registered in 2005 under its current ownership. The nursery is close to the centre of Petersfield, Hampshire. There are 19 members of staff who work with the children, 12 of whom hold relevant early years qualifications at level 3, 4, 5 or 6, while others are studying for their qualifications. The nursery is open from Monday to Friday all year round. Sessions are from 8am to 6pm. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Natasha Jarvis

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the nursery 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 nursery.
- The manager explained the curriculum intentions to the inspector during a learning walk.
- The manager and the inspector observed and evaluated an activity together.
- The inspector observed staff and children throughout the day.
- Parents shared their views with the inspector through discussions.
- The inspector sampled relevant documents.

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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