

Inspection of Little Acorns Pre-School

St John's Church, Church Road, St Johns, Woking, Surrey GU21 7QN

Inspection date:

20 April 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Good

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision requires improvement

Although children enjoy their play and activities, they sometimes do not receive interactions that support their learning well enough. At times, some staff's interactions are not sustained and extended with children consistently. However, at other times, staff interact with children effectively. For instance, they get down to the children's level to speak with them and model language well to them. Staff are identifying children's needs for additional support in their learning. The newly employed special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) is already starting to have a positive impact on children's learning. For example, children excitedly joined in with a 'magic box' activity. They had fun, listened well, and repeated words and phrases. This supported their developing communication and language skills effectively at this time.

Children arrive keen to play and soon become involved in activities. For example, they enjoyed exploring dough and dinosaur stickers. Children form positive relationships with staff. Most are confident to ask for help. However, some children are unsure about changes in the routine. Staff sometimes do not offer guidance, to help support children's understanding, for instance about snack time arrangements. Older children show care and consideration for others, including younger friends. For instance, a child gave another child a cuddle and fetched an ice pack for them, following a minor accident. Children's behaviour is mostly good. Sometimes, staff do not always consistently promote the rules or explain these to children, to strengthen their understanding of expectations.

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

- The quality of education is variable. There are times when children are supported well by staff. However, staff do not always provide all children with sustained good-quality interactions, particularly children who happily play for longer periods of time by themselves.
- The manager, who is also the owner, recognises the impact of COVID-19 on children's learning. She understands that some children need more support in their social and language development due to this. However, staff practice is not currently monitored well enough, to ensure staff deploy themselves and interact with children more consistently, to help close these gaps more successfully.
- Children enjoy their play and make some choices about what to do. They develop some suitable skills for the future. Older children develop their independence appropriately. They know to get a tissue when they need one and dispose of this in the bin.
- Staff give children praise and encouragement, which promotes their self-esteem and confidence. However, at times, staff do not guide some children well enough or give them consistent explanations. This does not help some children

manage changes in routine more confidently or help them develop a consistent understanding of the behaviour expectations, such as walking indoors.

- Parents praise the pre-school and staff highly. They say that staff are 'lovely and nurturing' and that they have 'really good' communication with staff. Parents comment that their children have settled well. Overall, partnerships with parents and others are good. Staff know children well. On occasion, they do not gather more information about children, to help strengthen partnership working, and to further support the meeting of children's needs. In addition, sometimes, links are not built effectively with other settings children attend.
- The manager uses additional funding appropriately, including to pay for additional staff. This enables the new SENCO to spend time with children who need extra help and support. The SENCO has met with local authority advisers, to help identify the best ways to support individual children. In addition, she has worked with parents and other professionals. The new arrangements are beginning to have a good effect on the quality of all children's experiences, particularly those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).
- The manager and staff team are taking some positive steps to develop and improve the quality of the pre-school. The manager is addressing areas to help support the efficient operation of her pre-school. This includes improved organisation of paperwork, and a more structured induction for new staff. A new approach to supervision has recently been implemented. These meetings are helping to identify further ideas for future improvements, including the learning environment. In addition, some professional development and training opportunities are being identified for staff.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The designated safeguarding leads know and understand their roles and responsibilities securely. Staff know how to recognise indicators that children may be at risk of harm. They understand that they need to act on any concerns about children's welfare or other staff's behaviours. Staff have access to a good range of information, to help them manage any concerns, including making referrals to outside agencies. Staff demonstrate awareness of how to promote children's safety, for instance through completing risk assessments of the premises and supervising children closely while they eat.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- build on the organisation of the pre-school, to help reflect on and monitor the quality of the provision, and identify and implement improvements that raise the overall quality to a consistently good level

- ensure all children, including those with SEND, receive effective support and interactions, to meet their learning and development needs at a consistently good level
- strengthen the partnership working further with other settings, professionals and parents, to help share and gather all relevant information in order to meet children's care and learning needs more effectively
- develop children's understanding of routines and expectations, to help them understand the daily routines and behaviour expectations more consistently.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY392763
Local authority	Surrey
Inspection number	10232396
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register
Day care type	Sessional day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	2 to 4
Total number of places	30
Number of children on roll	18
Name of registered person	Pattinson, Michelle
Registered person unique reference number	RP902951
Telephone number	07947145710
Date of previous inspection	13 June 2019

Information about this early years setting

Little Acorns Pre-School registered in 2009 and is located in Woking, Surrey. It is open Monday to Friday, from 9am to 2.30pm, during term time only. The pre-school is in receipt of early years funding to provide free early education for children aged two, three and four years. There are five staff who work with the children. Of these, four hold level 3 qualifications and one holds a level 5 qualification.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Sheena Bankier

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.
- The manager spoke to the inspector about the curriculum intentions for children's learning.
- The inspector observed children's play, activities and routines. She interacted and chatted with children during the inspection.
- Parents spoke to the inspector to share their views about the pre-school.
- Meetings were held with the manager, and the inspector spoke to staff, including the SENCo.
- The manager and the inspector observed an activity together and evaluated the quality of this afterwards.

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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