

Inspection of Little Acorns Pre-School

Kingsnorth Recreation Centre, Field View, Kingsnorth, ASHFORD, Kent TN23 3NZ

Inspection date: 19 May 2022

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| 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 are happy and confident. They smile as they enter the pre-school and instantly engage in activities that interest them. Children move freely and confidently around the different areas of the pre-school as they direct their own play. They learn to be increasingly independent in their self-care. For example, at mealtimes, children serve themselves, while engaging in a conversation with staff about oral health and the water cycle.

Children form strong bonds with the staff, who are caring and supportive in their approach. They demonstrate that they feel safe and secure. For instance, children are confident to speak to new people. They tell visitors about their friends and share their play experiences with them.

Children behave well. They say 'please' and 'thank you' to each other and staff. Children show care and consideration towards each other. For example, older children help younger ones to find their coats and shoes.

Children share their ideas and experiences with staff, who listen and respond intently. As a result, they develop a good attitude to learning. Children, including the youngest, are eager to try new things. For example, staff help younger children to use the climbing wall for the first time.

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

- The key-person system is effective. Staff know their children well. They know where children are in their learning. Staff provide a curriculum that supports continuing development. All children make good progress from their starting point. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported. Management and staff seek advice and support from other professionals promptly. They develop individual plans to support children's learning and development with professionals and parents, and they review their progress regularly.
- Staff support children's physical development well. For example, children confidently run, ride scooters and negotiate their space well. Staff support children to take age-appropriate risks and encourage them to keep trying, such as when using the climbing wall. As a result, children develop their self-confidence and resilience.
- Staff support children's independence. They encourage children to manage their own self-care. Children go to the toilet, wash their hands and dress themselves. They learn to share and take turns. For instance, staff encourage children to share the magnetic shapes.
- Staff support children's language and communication well. They use sign

language while speaking to children and ensure that all children understand what is said to them. Staff introduce new words to widen children's vocabulary and learning. For example, while discussing the Queen's birthday, staff discuss and introduce new words, such as 'palace' and 'jubilee', and explain their meanings. However, staff do not consistently allow children enough time to process and respond to questions asked of them to extend their learning further.

- On occasions, such as group times, staff do not consistently ensure that all children have equal opportunities to be involved. Sometimes, staff focus their teaching on more-confident children and overlook the quieter children. As a result, children do not equally benefit from staff's interactions and teaching.
- Partnership with parents is effective. Management and staff keep parents informed about their children's day at the pre-school. Parents comment positively on the progress their children have made, especially with regards to their social skills and confidence. Information is gathered from parents when children first start at the pre-school, which helps to begin a two-way flow of communication between parents and staff.
- There has been a recent change to the leadership team in the pre-school, and staff report that they feel well supported. Staff communicate well, share responsibilities and delegate tasks. For instance, they keep each other informed as they move within the pre-school. Regular staff meetings provide the whole team with a place to talk together and share good practice.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The manager and her team have a good understanding of the importance of keeping children safe from harm. They know how to recognise the signs and indicators of abuse and report any safeguarding concerns about a child or an adult. The manager and her team know and understand the wider aspects of safeguarding, such as radicalisation and county lines. Staff recognise the importance of being alert to changes in children's behaviour during their play. The manager ensures that staff's knowledge of safeguarding is updated and relevant. She does this through regular staff meetings.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- support staff to challenge and to extend children's learning, allowing them enough time to process and respond to questions during interactions to further support their language development
- support staff to ensure that all children have equal opportunity to participate and share their ideas.

Setting details

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| Unique reference number | 127324 |
| Local authority | Kent |
| Inspection number | 10228226 |
| 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 | 33 |
| Number of children on roll | 53 |
| Name of registered person | Little Acorns Pre-School Committee |
| Registered person unique reference number | RP908652 |
| Telephone number | 01233 503843 |
| Date of previous inspection | 16 September 2016 |

Information about this early years setting

Little Acorns Pre-School registered in 1998 and is situated on the edge of the Park Farm Estate in Ashford, Kent. The pre-school is open from Monday to Friday during school term time only. Sessions are from 8.45am to 3pm. The pre-school employs 13 members of staff. Of these, two hold qualifications at level 5, seven hold qualifications at level 3, one holds a qualification at level 2, and three members of staff are unqualified. The pre-school provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector
Oshra Murphy

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 provider and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the pre-school.
- The manager joined the inspector on a learning walk and talked to the inspector about their curriculum and what they want their children to learn.
- Children spoke with the inspector about what they are doing during the inspection.
- 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 on children's learning.
- The inspector carried out joint observations of group activities with the manager.
- The inspector spoke to several parents during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The inspector looked at relevant documentation and reviewed evidence of the suitability of staff working in the pre-school.

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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