

Inspection of Small Oaks

31a High Street, Doveridge, Ashbourne, Derbyshire DE6 5NA

Inspection date: 26 May 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
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 are happy and arrive at the nursery full of excitement. They all sit and sing a welcome song to greet their friends. They are eager to play outside, and older children independently put on their all-in-one suits and venture outside. They scramble to the top of the climbing frame, where they negotiate the steps safely and balance along the beams. Children splash in puddles and scream with delight as the water hits their faces.

Children behave well and have a positive attitude to their learning. Younger children press toys and giggle and smile as the animals pop up. They laugh as they see themselves in the mirror and snuggle close to staff to look at books. Older children relish role play. They learn about Africa as they pretend to go on a safari. They put on hats and use binoculars to look for animals. Staff encourage the children to draw or write about the animals they see. Children delight in listening to African music and the noise the drums make. They bang their home-made drums to the music and energetically move and dance expressing their creativity and imagination well.

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

- The manager is reflective and supports her staff well. They meet each month to discuss children's care and learning. The manager and staff have a clear understanding of the nursery curriculum and what they want the children to learn. Children explore the opportunities on offer and practise the skills they need for future learning. For example, children in pre-school solve problems as they decide how to make a bridge for their cars. They use wooden blocks and carefully fit them together until the bridge is strong enough.
- Staff support children's language skills well. They give younger children a running commentary of what they are doing so that they understand words. Staff repeat words and sing popular songs to help to extend children's vocabulary. Older children hold conversations, ask questions and describe objects. For example, they ask about the roads in Africa and talk about how bumpy and dusty they are as they ride in their pretend jeep.
- Children concentrate for long periods. Older children have great fun as they engage in exploring clay and making African animals. They manipulate the clay and talk about the patterns on the animals, such as stripes on zebras and spots on leopards. However, staff do not always make use of opportunities that arise from activities to encourage children to count.
- Staff take children into the community to develop their understanding of the wider world. Children visit shops and enjoy the woodlands. They go on trips to take part in music sessions to broaden their musical skills and to meet other children. Parents comment on these trips and say that their children thoroughly

enjoy their days out of the nursery.

- Staff inform parents about their children's achievements. They talk to them at collection times, use an online communication system and send parents photos. Parents comment that they know about what their children are doing. This means that parents can help their children at home if they wish.
- Children learn to appreciate diversity and accept people who have other cultures and backgrounds. Staff provide an inclusive curriculum, which prepares children well for life in modern Britain. Staff teach children about race and ethnicity through engaging role-play activities and meaningful discussions. Children become enthralled while looking at books about children and their families. They compare hair textures and the homes they live in.
- Staff plan routines in the nursery to support children to understand what will happen next. They promote children's independence and encourage them to do things for themselves in preparation for school. For example, children select their own play, feed themselves and learn good hygiene procedures. However, staff do not plan changes in the daily routine as effectively. This is evident at mealtimes and when children go between playing inside and outside. At these times, some children are left waiting and are not fully engaged in learning.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The manager and staff fully understand their role and responsibility to keep children safe from harm. They know who to contact and what to do if there is a concern about a child's welfare. Staff are aware of their duty to prevent children from being exposed to situations that may put them at significant risk of harm. Staff encourage children to learn about taking risks for themselves. For example, children use knives carefully to cut clay. The manager has robust recruitment procedures and checks staff suitability to care for children.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- strengthen the curriculum for maths to further support children to count and use number during their play
- review how the changes in the daily routine work so that children are engaged in learning during these times, paying particular attention to mealtimes and when children go outside.

Setting details

Unique reference number	2534149
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	10208534
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	1 to 9
Total number of places	18
Number of children on roll	44
Name of registered person	Small Oaks Childcare Limited
Registered person unique reference number	2534148
Telephone number	07966932088
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

Small Oaks registered in 2019 and is located in Doveridge, Derbyshire. The nursery employs eight members of staff. Of these, four hold childcare qualifications at level 3. Three members of staff are qualified teachers, including the manager. The nursery opens from Monday to Friday all year round, except for bank holidays and a week at Christmas. Sessions are from 7.30am to 5.30pm. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Jan Hughes

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 inspector had a learning walk with the manager, who is also the provider, and discussed how she organises and implements her curriculum.
- The manager took part in a joint observation with the inspector. The inspector considered the quality of education during activities and the impact this has on children's learning.
- The children spoke with the inspector and invited her to join in with their play at appropriate times throughout the inspection. The inspector observed interactions and the conversations between the staff and the children and considered the impact these have on children's learning.
- The inspector spoke to staff and key persons to consider their knowledge of what they want the children to learn.
- Parents spoke to the inspector on the telephone so that she could take account of their views.
- The inspector had a discussion with the manager about staff's performance and training and how she evaluates their practice.
- The manager showed the inspector relevant documentation and evidence of the suitability of the staff.

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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