

Inspection of Little Acorns @ Our Lady & St Oswalds

Upper Brook Street, Oswestry, Shropshire SY11 2TG

Inspection date: 5 October 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

Children are happy to arrive at this calm and welcoming setting. Staff know the children well and greet them with a smile. For children who may need extra support leaving parents and carers, staff offer extra reassurance and cuddles. The bonds staff have with children ensures they soon settle and are ready to enjoy their day. Children show confidence to choose from a varied range of resources that cover all the areas of learning. They move freely between the indoor and outdoor areas and quickly engage in their play. Staff encourage children's independence throughout the day. For example, children put on their own coats to go outside. At snack time, they peel their own bananas and pour their own drinks.

Children are polite and behave well. They learn to respect each other and the resources they use. Staff are good role models. Children learn to take turns and share. They follow instructions well and are keen to help. For example, they help to set up the junk modelling and then tidy away afterwards. Staff remind children of the rules. They encourage and praise the children constantly throughout the day. This helps to support children's self-esteem and emotional development.

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

- The manager and staff are passionate about the setting. Professional development plays an important role in the setting's ethos and improvement plans. For example, all staff have recently undertaken a course for improving children's communication skills. They also have regular supervisions and support from the manager. This further enhances staffs' knowledge and will improve the already good teaching.
- The well-thought-out environment enables children to re-enact their past experiences. For example, they enjoy playing in the role-play shop. They buy 'bananas' and 'pineapples', give the money to the shopkeeper, and the shopkeeper scans the items. This shows they have developed life skills that will benefit their future learning.
- The large outside space challenges children and gives them the opportunity to move freely in varying ways. Children have access to a forest school once a week. This enables them to explore and develop a range of skills in a different environment.
- Staff plan a broad curriculum around the children's interests. Therefore, children are happy to engage in their learning. However, sometimes, staff do not always consider children's individual next steps and use what children already know to plan more precisely to deepen children's learning even further.
- Children listen and respond to stories. Staff create anticipation as they read. For example, as staff say, 'there's no such thing as a Gruffalo', the children excitedly shout out 'yes, there is'. This enhances children's love of books.

- Staff model good language as they talk to the children. Some staff introduce new vocabulary to the children. For example, during a weighing activity, children said about the item that it was getting 'bigger', and staff repeated it using the correct terminology of 'heavier'. However, this is not consistent, and further opportunities to extend children's vocabulary and language are sometimes missed.
- The setting has strong links to the attached school. Teachers visit the setting, and the staff take children to school story times. This aids the transition to school and supports the children's well-being.
- Parents are complimentary about the setting. They feel well supported. They have up-to-date information regarding their child's day and progress they have made. They also have information shared on an online app. During the summer break, the staff hosted stay-and-play sessions, to ensure a smooth return for children in September.
- At lunchtime, children bring their own packed lunch or have a cooked dinner brought from the school. They sit together at the table, using knives and forks appropriately. Staff make this occasion a sociable event, sitting and chatting with the children.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Managers and staff have a good understanding of how to keep children safe. They recognise possible signs and symptoms of abuse. They know the procedures to take should a child be at risk of harm or what to do if someone makes an allegation against a member of staff. A robust recruitment procedure ensures staff are checked for their suitability to work with children. Managers continue to check staffs' ongoing suitability at regular intervals. The environment and resources are clean and well maintained. Staff undertake regular risk assessments. This all ensures that children are safeguarded.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- focus even more closely on children's individual next steps in learning to help them make even better progress
- provide even more support for children to build on their increasing vocabulary and language skills.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY232143
Local authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	10233616
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	24
Number of children on roll	25
Name of registered person	Little Acorns @ Our Lady & St. Oswald's Pre-School Committee
Registered person unique reference number	RP520700
Telephone number	01691676464
Date of previous inspection	23 November 2016

Information about this early years setting

Little Acorns @ Our Lady & St Oswalds registered in 2002. The pre-school employs six members of childcare staff. All staff hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3. The pre-school opens from Monday to Friday, during term time. Sessions are from 8am until 5pm. The pre-school provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Sue Smith

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 manager and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the provider.
- The inspector observed the quality of education being provided, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact that this was having on children's learning.
- The inspector carried out joint observations of group activities with the manager.
- 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.
- 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 nursery.

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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