

Inspection of Little Ashes Pre-School

Parish Hall, Horsepond, Great Brickhill, Milton Keynes MK17 9BA

Inspection date: 7 February 2023

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 delight in their play and learning at the pre-school. They follow a well-planned and interesting curriculum that ignites their passion for learning. Staff provide opportunities for children to explore their ideas. For example, children take great interest in fruit and vegetables and are curious to find out what is inside them. Staff provide them with knives to cut open the foods and children observe the different types of seeds they discover. This fascinates them, and they excitedly talk with each other and staff, using descriptive words to explain their findings.

Staff have high ambitions for what children can achieve and confidence in their abilities. They trust children to assess small risks for themselves and teach them how to use tools and equipment safely. In turn, children become confident in their own abilities. All children, including children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good progress in their development. This is because staff know them well and target support and encouragement to help to meet children's individual needs. Parents are extremely pleased with the care that their children receive. They attribute children's increasing knowledge of numbers and letters to the education that they receive at the pre-school.

Children's behaviour is consistently good. Rules and expectations are clear, especially during the forest school provision, and children follow them diligently. They know about ways to help keep themselves safe.

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

- There is a carefully constructed curriculum in place for children, which empowers them to be self-sufficient, confident individuals who can assess and manage risks. Children explore a wealth of opportunities to develop their confidence and lead their play. This is hugely beneficial for their self-esteem, interest and motivation to learn.
- There is a new management team at the pre-school who are implementing multiple changes to the curriculum, resources and organisation. This is starting to have obvious and significant benefits for children's learning, even though the changes are still in their early stages.
- The forest school provides children with exciting and engaging opportunities to develop their skills. They confidently use tools as they make bird feeders, build dens and make potions. They practise balance and coordination and use natural brushes for making marks and painting. Children are enthralled by their learning and approach problems with a 'can do' attitude.
- Staff successfully promote children's communication and language development. They use a broad vocabulary that exposes children to unfamiliar words, which they quickly understand and use themselves. Support for children who speak

English as an additional language is highly effective. Children enjoy an environment that is rich in talk, songs and stories.

- Staff are clear on how to implement the new curriculum. However, because the curriculum is still in its infancy, staff have yet to embed it securely and monitor its effectiveness.
- Key-person relationships are effective in supporting children to develop strong attachments with the staff who care for them. Children arrive happily and settle quickly at the pre-school.
- Staff understand how young children develop emotionally and are considerate of their thoughts and feelings. Staff give children warning of any impending change in the routine and speak to children with respect. In turn, children respond to staff and each other with the same degree of politeness and respect. This helps to create an environment where children feel secure and their needs are met well.
- There is a keen sense of community feeling at the pre-school. Parents can join the committee team who run the pre-school and help to shape the education their children receive. Children delight in visiting local farms and growing vegetables and fruits on their allotment. These activities contribute towards their sense of belonging and understanding of the world.
- Previously, staff had little support and supervision in their roles. The manager has introduced new measures for coaching staff to enhance their personal effectiveness and professional development. However, as these are still very new, they are yet to have full benefit for staff's practice.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Safeguarding is given high priority at the pre-school. Staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities in keeping children safe. Committee members are equally well-informed and aware of how to keep children safe. All undertake extensive training to understand how best to help protect children. The committee members are vigilant in ensuring that all staff who work with children are suitable to do so. All are fully aware of how to work with local safeguarding partners to report any concerns about children's welfare. Staff supervise children closely, undertaking risk assessments to help reduce any potential risks, particularly when they engage in forest school activities.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- embed the curriculum for children, increasing staff's confidence in implementing a dynamic and ambitious curriculum that continues to meet children's changing needs

- sustain the good quality supervision and support for staff to enhance their performance and further increase the quality and delivery of the curriculum.

Setting details

Unique reference number	140859
Local authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	10266957
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	26
Number of children on roll	35
Name of registered person	Little Ashes Committee
Registered person unique reference number	RP908620
Telephone number	07855 215154
Date of previous inspection	6 June 2019

Information about this early years setting

Little Ashes Pre-School registered in 1995 and is managed by a parent committee. It operates from the village hall in Great Brickhill. The pre-school is open on weekdays, during school term times, from 9am until 3pm. It is in receipt of funding for the provision of free early education for children aged two, three and four years. The committee employs nine members of staff, six of whom hold relevant early years qualifications at level 3 and above.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Hayley Marshall-Gowen

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 inspector discussed the intent of the curriculum and observed its implementation during activities, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact this has on children's learning.
- A joint observation was completed and discussed with the manager.
- The inspector held a meeting with the manager and the chairperson of the committee. She looked at relevant documentation, such as evidence of the suitability of staff working in the pre-school.
- The inspector spoke with staff and children at suitable times throughout the inspection.
- Parents were invited to share their views with the inspector. Several parents discussed their views during the inspection and the inspector took account of all feedback received.

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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