

# Inspection of Little Acorns Childcare

St. Georges Church, 8 Audley Road, Folkestone CT20 3QA

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Inspection date:

8 March 2023

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## **Overall effectiveness**

**Inadequate**

The quality of education

**Requires improvement**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Requires improvement**

Personal development

**Inadequate**

Leadership and management

**Inadequate**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Not applicable

## What is it like to attend this early years setting?

### The provision is inadequate

Breaches of the safeguarding and welfare requirements have a significant impact on children's safety and well-being. Older children are not adequately supervised when they are eating. In addition, children are put down to sleep on shared bedding that is not washed regularly and is unclean. Furthermore, the changing facilities for young children are poor, with unhygienic, torn changing mats.

The quality of teaching is variable across the nursery and, on occasion, poor. Children do not benefit from consistent support to develop their communication and language. At times, children show high levels of interest and enjoyment when a clear learning intention is planned for activities and when staff are engaged. For example, babies enjoy exploring a sensory tuff tray and older children focus on pouring and measuring water with different containers. However, some staff sit alongside children, but do not interact well. This does not help children to develop positive attitudes to learning.

Despite these weaknesses, most children behave well and are often happily engaged in play. Babies actively and independently explore the resources and form bonds with their key person. They enjoy throwing balls in the ball pit and listening to stories. They often babble and smile as staff play with them sensitively and encouragingly. Older children come in with a smile and are content as they occupy themselves happily with the resources on offer.

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

- The provider does not adequately ensure that there are effective arrangements to promote children's safety. Staff do not supervise children adequately and staff deployment is often weak. Staff too often prioritise carrying out routine tasks, like tidying and setting up resources, and have their backs to children. As a result, children's safety and development are compromised. This is particularly relevant at mealtimes, where there is the potential for choking.
- Staff do not adequately promote children's health. The changing mats used for nappies are torn and dirty and the inner sponge is exposed. Bedding is dirty and the same bedding is used for all children, with infrequent washing. This poor practice does not adequately prevent the spread of infection. Staff place sufficient focus on ensuring the toilets and other areas of the bathrooms are clean.
- Staff supervision is not fully effective in identifying and addressing all areas of need. The provider has taken steps to begin to identify weaknesses in her staff's knowledge. She has identified some training to support in addressing these weaknesses. However, this has not been quick enough to ensure there is continuous improvement to the quality of children's care and learning.

- Staff demonstrate an understanding of the curriculum and what children need to learn. They plan together to provide activities that cover different areas of learning. For example, stories are read to develop literacy skills, play dough activities support hand muscle development and jigsaws and other games support turn taking. However, staff do not have a good understanding of how to use their interactions to support children and extend their learning.
- Babies benefit from learning new vocabulary when staff speak with them throughout activities and daily routines. Staff speak clearly and often repeat language, such as 'sprinkle' and 'squish', when investigating cereal and textures. Staff working with older children sometimes introduce them to new language, including 'heaviest' and 'lightest' when weighing. However, too often their interactions are simplistic and the quality of communication is inconsistent across the staff team.
- Staff effectively use a range of methods to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. For example, they set individual targets and use visual aids. Children engage positively in activities that are planned to reflect their individual learning needs. The provider recognises the importance of working with other agencies to meet children's individual needs.
- Staff provide many small-group times for children, to support them to build their listening and focus skills, in preparation for moving on to school. Younger children enjoy looking at photos and talking about their home life, while older children enjoying answering questions about a familiar story.
- Parents report that they are happy with the contact and information that the staff provide about their child. They know who their child's key person is and the targets that they are working towards. They are happy with the progress their child makes, both academically and socially.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

The weaknesses in the supervision of children and the arrangements to promote their health, compromises their safety and well-being. However, all staff are able to identify the signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect that may indicate a child is at risk of harm. They understand the referral process to follow if they have a concern about a child's safety. All staff undertake regular training to keep their knowledge up to date, and discuss safeguarding matters during supervisions and staff meetings.

## What does the setting need to do to improve?

**To meet the requirements of the early years foundation stage and Childcare Register the provider must:**

	<b>Due date</b>
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ensure that children are adequately supervised at all times, and that staff are deployed effectively to keep children safe, particularly at snack and mealtimes	09/03/2023
improve the arrangements to promote children's health, with particular regard to providing clean bedding and ensuring nappy changing practices are hygienic	09/03/2023
improve arrangements to identify and address gaps in staff knowledge and inconsistencies in practice, to improve the implementation of activities and more effectively promote children's learning.	05/04/2023

## Setting details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	2619233
<b>Local authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	10275999
<b>Type of provision</b>	Childcare on non-domestic premises
<b>Registers</b>	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register
<b>Day care type</b>	Full day care
<b>Age range of children at time of inspection</b>	0 to 4
<b>Total number of places</b>	39
<b>Number of children on roll</b>	49
<b>Name of registered person</b>	Little Acorns Childcare 2020 Ltd
<b>Registered person unique reference number</b>	2619231
<b>Telephone number</b>	07375971370
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not applicable

## Information about this early years setting

Little Acorns Childcare registered in 2020. It operates in Folkestone, Kent. They offer care Monday to Thursday, from 8am to 4pm. The provider receives funding to provide free early education for children aged two, three and four years. There are eight members of staff, including the owner. Of whom, five hold appropriate childcare qualifications at level 2 or above.

## Information about this inspection

### Inspector

Nina Harvey

## 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 provider and inspector completed a learning walk together and discussed the early years curriculum.
- The inspector viewed the provision and discussed the safety and suitability of the premises.
- The inspector observed the quality of education being provided and assessed the impact that this was having on children's learning.
- The provider and inspector carried out a joint observation and spoke with staff.
- Parents shared their views on the nursery with the inspector.

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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