

Inspection of Growing Places @ Little Acorns

Little Acorns, Mayles Lane, Wickham, Hants PO17 5AG

Inspection date: 31 May 2023

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 flourish at this welcoming nursery. They are confident, happy and curious. Children have a rich variety of opportunities to be independent thinkers. They are captivated by the exciting and well-thought-out activities that staff provide. For example, children enjoy learning about minibeasts and their habitats. They use magnifying glasses to find creatures and identify them using books. Children are kind and respectful to each other and work harmoniously together. They initiate conversation and share ideas. Children learn the meaning of new words, such as 'stag beetle' and 'environment'. Older children offer support and guidance to younger children. They help them to lift natural resources, initiate conversation and share ideas. This supports children to develop positive relationships.

Staff have high expectations of all children. They are good role models and sensitively teach children how to follow rules and procedures. Children behave very well and have good manners. They take turns and share resources. For instance, children wait patiently to use the spades to help dig holes in the soil, and say 'please' and 'thank you' regularly during interactions with others. Staff and children are treated as equals. For example, during 'morning proposal', they discuss what they would like to do during the day. Everyone has an opportunity to share their ideas. This ensures that all children feel included and valued.

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

- Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported well. Staff are attentive to children's individual needs. Leaders signpost parents to support from other professionals and implement tailored teaching and care routines. This helps to improve outcomes for children.
- Leaders have established close links with local schools. Children are prepared for the next stage of their education and supported to make a seamless transition through teacher visits and good communication between settings. This ensures continuity for children.
- The quality of education is good. Staff are passionate about ensuring that children have rich learning opportunities. They plan a wide range of interesting activities to support children's individual needs and interests. For example, children use dough to create pizza using flowers, herbs, sticks and leaves. Staff extend children's learning by encouraging them to think of how plants grow. However, not all staff encourage children to participate in activities. This means that there are occasions when children are not engaged in meaningful play and learning.
- Children make good progress in all areas of their development. Staff know children well. They find out what children know and can do when they start attending, and monitor their development through observations. This enables

any gaps in children's learning and development to be identified quickly. Staff plan activities to further extend their learning based on children's interests and ages and stages of development.

- Staff plan the environment effectively. Children benefit greatly from playing outdoors. Staff teach them how to interact safely and look after animals, such as goats, sheep, ducks, chickens and rabbits. Children learn how to grow their own food, which they help to prepare and consume. This helps them to respect nature and enhances their developing independence skills.
- The curriculum is well thought out. Staff provide a good balance of adult-led and child-led activities. They thoughtfully plan fun activities that sequence children's learning to build on what children know and can do. For instance, during music and song time, children take turns to call out the names of wild animals. Staff extend their learning by encouraging children to make animal sounds and move like animals. This results in all children being engaged and motivated to learn.
- Children are confident communicators. Staff talk to children, ask them questions and introduce them to new words. For instance, during story time, children repeat words and phrases. They discuss characters and predict what happens next. This helps to support their communication and language skills.
- Parent partnerships are strong. Parents highly praise leaders and staff. They comment that they feel 'supported', and that 'staff are open and honest'. Parents form good relationships with each other through volunteering at the setting and through celebrations organised by the nursery. This means that children have opportunities to interact with people from their local community and helps them to understand diversity.
- Staff morale is very high. Staff have regular opportunities to evaluate and discuss their practice. Leaders provide rich learning opportunities for staff. For example, staff attend specialist training in Italy, funded by the nursery. This helps staff to improve their knowledge and understanding of different teaching styles.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The manager and staff have a clear understanding of how to keep children safe from harm. They know the signs and symptoms of abuse and the procedures to follow if they are concerned for children's safety. The manager has robust systems in place to ensure that staff are suitable to work with children. All staff who work at the nursery have been appropriately checked and their continued suitability is monitored regularly. Leaders ensure that staff have access to training to refresh their knowledge of safeguarding. Staff help children to manage risks. For instance, staff teach children about the dangers of extreme weather. Children put on their hats and help apply sun cream. This helps children understand how to stay safe in the sun.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- improve the support for less qualified or experienced staff to develop their teaching skills, so that all children consistently benefit from high-quality learning experiences.

Setting details

Unique reference number	2631346
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	10285481
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	2 to 5
Total number of places	25
Number of children on roll	32
Name of registered person	Community Childcare Centres
Registered person unique reference number	RP911257
Telephone number	07794744947
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

Growing Places @ Little Acorns registered in 2021. It operates from premises near the village of Wickham, near Portsmouth, Hampshire. The setting operates all day Monday to Friday and is open throughout the year. It offers care to children aged two and over and also provides out-of-school care. The setting has an outdoor learning approach. The manager holds a relevant level 3 qualification. Staff qualifications range between level 6 to level 3.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Loretta Murphy

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 setting.
- The manager and inspector completed a learning walk together of all areas of the nursery and discussed the early years curriculum.
- Children and staff spoke with the inspector during the inspection.
- 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 a joint observation of an activity with the manager.
- The inspector spoke to several parents during the inspection and took account of their views.

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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