

Inspection of Little Acorns Pre School (Folkestone)

Folkestone Baptist Church, Hill Road, Folkestone, Kent CT19 6LY

Inspection date: 7 June 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 are warmly greeted by the nurturing staff and are eager to start their day at the pre-school. They quickly settle in the well-planned environment that is set up to meet the needs and interests of the children as they arrive. Children develop strong bonds and secure attachments with the caring staff. Children who arrive upset are comforted well by staff and settle quickly.

Staff are positive role models, and children giggle with delight as they join their play. For example, when children explore the dressing-up clothes, they invite staff to dress up with them. Staff allow children to take the lead in their learning, and suggest ideas to extend their thinking. Children show resilience as they keep trying to learn new skills, such as putting their shoes on independently to be ready for outside play.

Children enjoy their time outside. The regular access to outside meets the needs of the children, particularly children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), who relish having the freedom to be physically active. Children demonstrate good physical ability, as they roll and move the tyres to make towers, climb and explore digging in the sand area. Staff teach children to take appropriate risks and challenges as they play, building their confidence and self-esteem. Children behave incredibly well and respond excitedly as staff praise their achievements.

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

- Together the staff team and leaders have devised a broad and balanced curriculum. It builds on children's current knowledge and is closely linked to the learning needs and interests of the children. For example, there is an emphasis on children's speech and language and being able to get their wants and needs across. Staff are consistent with how they use open questioning to encourage children to verbalise their thoughts and feelings. Staff successfully teach children new words. Children show they remember and understand these words and can use them in context. For instance, when children were exploring where animals live, they were able to use the word 'habitat'. All children make good progress.
- The support for children with SEND is strong and consistent. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) works closely with staff to ensure that children with SEND receive targeted support at the earliest opportunity. The SENCo works closely with parents and other professionals. For example, they facilitate regular visits from members of staff from specialist schools, who come out to provide further support for SEND children and their key person. Children with SEND are making good levels of progress from their starting points.
- Staff have a strong focus on managing children's emotions and giving them time

to regulate how they feel before having further discussions with them. For example, when teaching children about sharing, staff provide children with comfort when initially upset, then talk about how children are feeling and what they can do next time. This supports children in understanding their behaviour and right from wrong.

- Partnerships with parents and carers are effective. Parents feedback that staff offer a wide range of information about their children. They praise the online journals where staff share observations and photos. These enable parents to build on their children's learning at home. Parents praise the 'family feel' to the setting and value the 'kindness' and 'commitment' of the staff team.
- Children enjoy the freedom to explore the environment and choose where and what they would like to play with. Staff are well deployed to meet the needs of the children during free play. However, the organisation of transition times for children are not as well planned as they could be. For example, the transition from tidying up to lunchtime for children is too long, and the large-group activities do not maintain children's interests. This results in some children being disengaged from their learning.
- Children go on outings in the local community that are linked to the curriculum. For instance, children visit the local library to support their love of books and to select books that link to their topics and interests. These outings help children to develop an understanding of their community and the wider world around them.
- Leaders work alongside their team. They constantly observe the quality of teaching delivered. Staff feel well supported to extend their knowledge and gain further qualifications, in order to support children within their care. Leaders are aware of the demands on the staff and ensure that they have time to complete paperwork. This supports staff's well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The pre-school has a strong safeguarding ethos. The manager and deputy have had enhanced training to take on the role of designated safeguarding leads. Staff receive regular training and discuss safeguarding regularly through one-to-one meetings with the manager and staff meetings. Staff are confident with the areas of abuse, and how these may present in children. They also have regard for the 'prevent' duty and female genital mutilation, and how to spot the signs and symptoms. Staff are clear on the reporting procedures as outlined in their safeguarding policy, and understand the action they must take if they are concerned about the conduct of staff members or in the event of an allegation being made.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- review the organisation of transition times, particularly after tidy-up time and when coming in from outdoors, to maintain children's good engagement at activities.

Setting details

Unique reference number	127323
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10291055
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	2 to 4
Total number of places	32
Number of children on roll	52
Name of registered person	Little Acorns Pre School (Folkestone) Committee
Registered person unique reference number	RP522678
Telephone number	01303 252259
Date of previous inspection	14 November 2018

Information about this early years setting

Little Acorns Pre School (Folkestone) registered in 1986 and is located in Folkestone, Kent. It is open Monday to Friday, from 8.15am to 3.30pm, during term time only. The pre-school employs nine staff. Of these, seven hold appropriate early years qualifications from level 3 to level 6. The pre-school receives funding to provide early education to children aged two, three and four years.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Kelly Southern

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the pre-school 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.
- We carried out this inspection as a result of a risk assessment, following information we received about the provider.
- The deputy manager and inspector completed a learning walk together of all areas of the nursery and discussed the early years curriculum.
- Children spoke to the inspector during the inspection.
- The inspector talked to staff at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The inspector observed the quality of education being provided, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact that this was having on children's learning.

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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