

Inspection of Little Companions Pre-School

Acorn Youth Club, Columbia Avenue Off Beech Avenue, Eastocte, Middlesex HA4 9SU

Inspection date: 9 June 2023

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
The quality of education	Outstanding
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is outstanding

Children flourish at this exceptional pre-school. They arrive full of enthusiasm, excited to see the welcoming staff. Children greet their friends and settle immediately, demonstrating that they feel secure. They explore the rich experiences, eager to continue their previous learning or discover something new. During the inspection, children have brought in toy fish to add to a small 'pond' they created in their garden. They are curious to discover whether the fish will float or sink. Children quickly become immersed in their learning and experiment by adding a wider range of items. They demonstrate their excellent thinking skills as they wonder whether an item's weight or texture will affect whether it floats or sinks.

Managers and staff have extremely high expectations for children. They help them to grow into confident individuals with very positive attitudes towards learning. For example, staff use playful ways to encourage children's writing skills, such as by creating tickets and passports in their pretend airport. Therefore, children are motivated to have a go because tasks are meaningful. Children show impeccable behaviour. They understand the expectations and moderate their emotions exceptionally well. For instance, children independently use timers to ensure that everyone has a fair turn with popular resources. Children enjoy many exciting experiences outside of the pre-school, such as visits to the local library, lido and tube station. They learn about their community and feel a strong sense of belonging.

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

- Managers are passionate about their role in supporting children and families, and they demonstrate integrity in their approach to inclusion. They ensure that all children, including those receiving funding, get their full entitlement to early education. The local authority encourages them to share their best practice with other providers, so that the benefits of their expertise are more widely shared.
- Children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), make excellent progress. Managers and staff are highly trained to support children with SEND and ensure that no child gets left behind in their learning. Children's needs are identified quickly and targeted support is swiftly provided. This includes referrals to other professionals when needed. Activities such as attention-building sessions are specially designed for children to close gaps in their learning.
- Managers create an open and inclusive culture, where everyone is valued. Staff describe the working environment as 'like a family'. They feel inspired to continue their professional development and speak with great enthusiasm about how they enhance the provision. For instance, staff describe how they evaluate

the learning environment to identify where children are less likely to play. They work together to make these areas more appealing so that children access an abundance of exciting learning opportunities.

- Children's learning is enhanced considerably by the wide range of things to do outdoors. The extensive outdoor area is used all year round to develop their resilience and curiosity. Children have excellent opportunities to explore and take risks within a safe environment. For example, the garden includes natural areas, with grass and wildflowers, as well as hard paved surfaces. Therefore, children learn to avoid obstacles and negotiate uneven surfaces carefully as they walk, run and ride tricycles.
- Staff immerse children in a language-rich environment, where communication and literacy skills are central to all that they do. Staff expertly bring songs, stories and poems to life. Therefore, children are captivated as they listen and develop a strong interest in reading. They retell stories during their play and relish every opportunity to look at books with staff and their friends.
- Parents are delighted with every aspect of the pre-school. They say managers and staff use every opportunity to engage with them, to promote their children's learning, health and development. For example, parents help to grow fruit and vegetables at the pre-school, which children harvest to eat or take home. Therefore, children begin to understand where food comes from and learn to make healthy choices.
- Managers and staff forge excellent links within the community. They enjoy friendly relationships with the pre-school's neighbours and people that use the park in which it is set. Staff use these associations to further enhance children's learning and experiences. For instance, local dog walkers visit regularly, which helps some children to overcome their fear of animals and learn how to be safe around them.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Safeguarding is a priority for everyone at the pre-school. Managers and staff attend regular training to maintain a secure knowledge of safeguarding issues. They know how to identify and report possible signs of abuse and neglect. Staff know what to do if they have concerns about a colleague's behaviour. They understand how to escalate concerns to local safeguarding agencies if needed. The managers implement stringent vetting procedures to help ensure that all staff are suitable. Staff assess risks and check the nursery premises daily. They implement safe routines and good hygiene to ensure that children play in a safe environment.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY462146
Local authority	Hillingdon
Inspection number	10289589
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 5
Total number of places	24
Number of children on roll	30
Name of registered person	Little Companions Limited
Registered person unique reference number	RP532555
Telephone number	07957398476
Date of previous inspection	29 November 2017

Information about this early years setting

Little Companions Pre-School registered in 2013. The setting operates during school term times. It is open Monday to Wednesday from 9am to 3pm. On Thursdays, sessions run from 11.30am to 2.30pm, and the setting opens from 9am to 2pm on Fridays. The pre-school offers funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. The provider employs nine staff to work with the children. Of these, eight hold relevant early years qualifications. The manager has a level 7 qualification and early years teacher status. Other staff are qualified at level 3 or level 2.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Sarah Crawford

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the setting received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the provider and has taken this into account in their evaluation of the provider.
- The manager showed the inspector around the pre-school premises. She explained how they organise the environment and learning programmes for children.
- The inspector observed activities and interactions between children and staff to evaluate the quality of the education. This included a joint observation with the manager.
- Parents, staff and children shared their views and experiences with the inspector at appropriate times during the inspection.
- Managers met with the inspector to discuss leadership issues, such as staff recruitment. They ensured that relevant documents were available for the inspector to view.

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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