

Inspection of Little Acorns Montessori Ltd

St Peters Hall, Hatchet Lane, Windsor SL4 2EG

Inspection date: 18 July 2023

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

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children are warmly welcomed by staff into this caring and nurturing environment. They quickly form secure attachments with the experienced staff team. Children are happy to approach staff for support, when needed, demonstrating that they feel confident, safe and secure. The manager and staff have high expectations for children and provide an exciting and well-organised learning environment. They want all children to be confident, independent and inquisitive learners when they move on to the next stage of their education. Older children are motivated to investigate the stimulating and adaptable resources, such as sand, water, play dough and construction sets. They become highly engaged and demonstrate creativity as they play. For instance, children work cooperatively to create a bus using crates and other materials. They develop their imaginations and share their ideas as they enjoy putting on a show for the staff and their friends. Younger children learn new words and begin to share resources. They explore sensory materials outside and discover concepts such as 'floating' and 'sinking'.

Staff are good role models and have a calming and respectful attitude towards children. In turn, children behave well and are beginning to manage their feelings. They listen intently to staff and follow instructions. Children are continuously praised for their efforts. All children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), make good progress in their learning based on their starting points.

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

- The experienced manager has a clear vision of what she wants children to learn. She has implemented a number of changes to improve the quality of the setting. However, these changes have not had sufficient time to be fully embedded. As a result, not all staff are aware of the curriculum intention, and some activities in the toddler room are not pitched at the right level. This means that, at times, some younger children are not fully engaged in meaningful activities.
- Children have ample opportunities to be physically active. They have regular access to the outdoor areas, where they run, kick balls, use the climbing equipment and carefully balance on beams. Children excitedly engage in water and sand play and use watering cans and gardening tools to pour, fill and empty containers. This helps to develop children's balance and coordination.
- Children develop their mathematical skills through a variety of activities. For example, children count, match and sort objects and talk about shapes. They enthusiastically test out their predictions of objects that might float or sink and excitedly measure and compare their heights using an outdoor tape measure. Staff engage well with children during these activities.
- Children develop strong independence skills and a sense of responsibility from

an early age. For example, children pour their drinks, use spoons and tongs to serve themselves at snack time and help to tidy away their plates and cups. They take off their shoes, listening carefully to staff's well-placed tips. Children are keen to carry out tasks for themselves and are proud of their achievements.

- Overall, staff support children's communication and language development. They engage children in conversations and provide a narrative while they play. Staff working with the older children introduce letter sounds and help children to recognise objects that start with associated letters. Children listen to stories with great concentration and hear a broad range of vocabulary. However, at times, staff miss opportunities to encourage the younger toddlers and quieter children to share their views, to build their confidence and language even further.
- Partnership working is strong. Links with external professionals and the local authority are good. Parents speak highly of the care and education the children receive. They state that they feel well informed about their children's learning and development through regular information delivered in a variety of ways, such as verbal feedback and an online app.
- The manager supports staff's continued professional development and well-being. She carries out supervision meetings, and staff attend regular professional development training that builds on their strengths. Following recent training on communication and language, staff use visual cues and sign language to help children understand routines and support their learning.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

All staff have a good understanding of their responsibility to safeguard children and protect them from harm. They confidently identify signs and symptoms of abuse and are knowledgeable about the 'Prevent' duty and the risks of radicalisation. Staff know the procedures to follow for recording and reporting concerns to safeguarding leads and the local authority. They receive regular safeguarding training to keep their knowledge up to date, including opportunities to regularly refresh their knowledge. Staff are deployed well, and they supervise children with vigilance. They carry out regular risk assessments and put measures in place to ensure the ongoing safety of the children.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- strengthen staff's understanding of the curriculum intent for the younger children so that their teaching is consistently focused on what they want children to learn
- support staff to help the younger and quieter children to consistently share their views, building their confidence and communication even further.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY469583
Local authority	Bracknell Forest
Inspection number	10301626
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 4
Total number of places	45
Number of children on roll	63
Name of registered person	Little Acorns Montessori Limited
Registered person unique reference number	RP532743
Telephone number	01344882942
Date of previous inspection	19 January 2018

Information about this early years setting

Little Acorns Montessori Ltd opened in 1994 and re-registered in 2013. The nursery is located in Cranbourne village, near Windsor, Berkshire. The nursery is open term time only, from 8am to 3pm, with a breakfast club offered from 8am to 9am. The nursery offers sessions from 9am to 12pm and from 12pm to 3pm. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. The nursery employs a manager with qualified teacher status. Eight other staff work with the children, six of whom hold recognised early years qualifications.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Joanne Allen

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 her evaluation of the provider.
- The manager and inspector completed a learning walk together of all areas of the nursery and discussed the early years curriculum.
- At suitable times during the inspection, the inspector spoke to staff, parents and children and took their views into account.
- A joint observation was carried out by the inspector and the manager.
- The manager and members of the staff team explained their role in safeguarding children to the inspector.
- Relevant documentation was reviewed by the inspector, including suitability checks and paediatric first-aid qualifications.

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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