

Inspection of Little Acorns Childcare

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

Inspection date: 15 August 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	Inadequate
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What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children enjoy their time with staff, who support them well to engage in play in a calm nursery environment. Staff get to know children well and place a strong emphasis on their well-being. For example, staff keep in contact with the parents of babies who are settling and ensure that sessions are not too long so that babies' time at nursery is positive. Children of all ages form strong bonds with staff.

Staff support children's behaviour well. Children receive gentle reminders about why their actions may not be safe and have suggestions about what can help them. Children show that they feel safe and secure and have respect for their environment. For instance, children know to return toys back before choosing something else to play with. Children form good friendships and enjoy the company of others.

The activities staff provide as part of the curriculum are varied and interesting. This helps children to be curious and fosters their interest in learning. For example, children eagerly explore frozen paint cubes, learn to use tools to screw and tighten bolts and practise tipping and pouring water in the garden. Additional funding is well used to support children's individual needs.

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

- The manager and staff have made significant progress since the last inspection. They have developed beyond the actions identified and reviewed all aspects of the nursery. For example, they have observed other settings to identify where they could develop further. As a result, they observe a positive impact on children's well-being, enjoyment in learning and overall development. Children now receive a good-quality early years experience.
- Children are confident to be independent throughout the day. For example, they fill up their watering cans to pour on plants. Children of all ages understand that they have choices and know their views will be listened to by staff. For example, babies gesture to show their needs, and older children explain what they would like. Children learn a range of skills to help them be prepared for their eventual move to school.
- Staff report high levels of well-being and receive good support. They welcome feedback from observations of their practice and feel that they are able to approach leaders to share any concerns. Consequently, the manager has a good oversight of the nursery, their strengths and areas that they would like to further develop.
- Staff support children's communication and language skills effectively. For example, staff model language to babies by singing during the day. Toddlers learn that they are using their 'index' finger when they scoop out sand from a

cone before adding dough to make pretend ice creams. Pre-school children use their good language skills to ask questions of each other as they share stories about their summer holidays.

- Staff carefully observe children's play and have a good understanding of their development. They skilfully work with children to help build and develop their ideas throughout the day. For example, children showed an interest in planting, which led to discussions about bugs. Children then used their prior knowledge of life cycles and 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar' story to inspire their drawings. Staff use these times well to help children develop more skills by talking about shapes they are drawing. However, the curriculum on offer is, at times, not ambitious enough to fully support the oldest children.
- Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive good support to help identify and understand their needs. Staff support children well to have full access to the curriculum on offer to help them make progress. However, some of the agreed strategies in place, such as the use of sign language and picture cards, are not fully embedded in all staff's practice. Therefore, children do not consistently receive the full benefits of these approaches.
- Parents are full of praise for the staff at the nursery. They feel that staff have good communication and can approach them to discuss anything about their children. Parents enjoy receiving daily updates and photos of what their children have been doing and observations of their development.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff have a good understanding of their responsibility to safeguard children. The designated safeguarding lead ensures that staff receive appropriate support so they understand different areas of child protection. For example, she talks to staff about different scenarios that may indicate a risk of harm to children and families. Staff know the signs that may impact on a child's welfare. They know the procedures to follow if they have concerns to share about a child. Staff maintain good, effective communication to ensure that higher risk activities, such as children using scissors and mealtimes, are fully supervised.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- develop further the curriculum to ensure that it is even more ambitious to extend children's critical thinking, particularly for the oldest children
- strengthen and further embed agreed strategies for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, to create more consistency in staff practice.

Setting details

Unique reference number	2619233
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10284738
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	1 to 4
Total number of places	41
Number of children on roll	59
Name of registered person	Little Acorns Childcare 2020 Ltd
Registered person unique reference number	2619231
Telephone number	07375971370
Date of previous inspection	8 March 2023

Information about this early years setting

Little Acorns Childcare registered in 2020. It is located in Folkestone, Kent. It offers 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 nine members of staff, five of whom hold appropriate childcare qualifications at level 2 or above. The provider, who is the manager, has a level 6 qualification.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Sarah Taylor-Smith

Inspection activities

- The inspector discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the provider and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the provider.
- The manager showed the inspector the provision and discussed the safety and suitability of the premises.
- The manager joined the inspector on a learning walk and talked to the inspector about their curriculum and what they want their children to learn.
- The inspector spoke to children to find out about their time at the setting.
- The inspector observed the interactions between staff and children.
- Parents shared their views with the inspector, who 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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