

Inspection of Little Oaks Pre-School

Adeyfield Community Centre, Queens Square, Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire
HP2 4EW

Inspection date: 24 January 2024

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 happy and settled at the pre-school. Staff support children to settle in quickly when they start. They speak confidently about the children and know how to comfort them. Babies build strong bonds with their key person, turning to them for reassurance as they explore the dedicated baby area.

Staff support children to be physically active. Children confidently climb on the play equipment and slide down the slide in the outdoor area. Staff lead music and dance sessions with great enthusiasm. This passion spreads to the children, who excitedly join in and follow the instructions and guidance staff provide them. These experiences help children to build the larger muscles in their bodies and strengthen their coordination.

Staff consider the layout of the rooms carefully to support children's independent learning. Children respond by confidently selecting things to play with themselves. They remain at the activities they choose for some time, engaging other children and adults in their play. Children behave well. Staff are on hand to support children who are less confident at selecting their own activities, gently encouraging them to come and join in. Children respond positively to this support, and this helps them to explore new learning opportunities and try new things for themselves.

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

- There is a well-planned and purposeful curriculum across the pre-school that is relevant to the children who attend. Managers know the local community well and carefully consider how to address any possible risks which they may encounter. They focus the curriculum on building children's skills and developing areas where children may be less confident. Managers and staff take into account children's existing experiences and the opportunities children may have less access to outside of the pre-school. As a result, children receive a well-rounded education at the pre-school.
- Children enjoy the range of learning opportunities on offer outdoors. Staff recognise the importance of children having access to a wide range of experiences and support children's learning effectively. For instance, children dig for worms in the mud and become excited when they find one. Staff build on this and encourage the children to take a closer look at the worm to explore their features in more detail, helping children to gain a deeper understanding of the natural world around them.
- Older children confidently speak to visitors, engaging them in imaginary play as they pretend to telephone their family members. They name the shapes they can see and accurately count how many sides each shape has, discussing what they know with those around them. However, opportunities for younger children

to build on their conversational skills and share what they know are not as consistently well supported. For instance, staff supervise children as they eat their lunch but do not engage them in meaningful discussions during this time.

- Parents are happy with the care their children receive. They feel well informed about their children's time at the pre-school and keep up to date with any relevant information in a variety of ways. Parents recognise the progress that their children make at the pre-school and the part that the staff play in this development.
- The strong management team oversees the provision well. It has clear ideas of how it can continue to develop the pre-school further. Staff receive strong support and regularly discuss their practice. Managers observe staff interactions with children and set staff achievable and relevant targets. Staff keenly develop their professional knowledge, completing relevant courses. They use what they learn in their training to make changes to the pre-school, which benefit the children who attend.
- Children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities receive effective support. Staff work closely with parents and other professionals to provide meaningful learning opportunities to children. Staff identify specific targets and update these regularly. They share strategies with parents to provide children with consistency between the pre-school and home. Support focuses on the individual needs of each child and is implemented well by the whole staff team.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts children's interests first.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- support staff to provide consistent opportunities for younger children to build on their social skills and share their own knowledge and experiences with others.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY392996
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10301068
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	1 to 4
Total number of places	32
Number of children on roll	40
Name of registered person	Hart, Tracy Ann
Registered person unique reference number	RP909768
Telephone number	01442 737 420
Date of previous inspection	31 January 2018

Information about this early years setting

Little Oaks Pre-School registered in 2009. The pre-school employs nine members of childcare staff, seven of which hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3. The pre-school opens Monday to Friday, during term time. Sessions are from 8am until 4pm. The pre-school provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Jenny Hardy

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 their evaluation of the provider.
- The deputy manager and inspector completed a learning walk together of all areas of the pre-school and discussed the early years curriculum.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation with the deputy manager, and they discussed the impact of staff interactions on children's learning.
- The inspector spoke to parents to gather their views of the pre-school.
- The inspector held discussions with staff, managers and children at appropriate times throughout the inspection.

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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