

Inspection of Little Companions Leicester

28 Saxby Street, LEICESTER LE2 0NE

Inspection date: 7 February 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

Staff create a supportive and secure environment for the children. They take time to find out about the children and their families. They learn about what the children enjoy so that they can prepare to welcome them into the nursery. For example, staff working with toddlers know they like to play with dolls. This preparation helps children to settle and be ready to play in the friendly and welcoming nursery. Staff know what helps to comfort each child if they become upset during the day.

Staff provide children with opportunities to develop their physical skills. Pre-school children use their fine muscle skills to squeeze tweezers to pick up spaghetti. Toddlers enjoy using their mark making skills to colour Chinese balloons and spread glue and glitter onto their pictures. Children of all ages play together outside and learn to climb, slide, and throw balls. Outdoors, staff remind children of some safety measures, for example, to sit down when they go down the slide. Indoors, children learn to control their bodies and to move in different ways as they join staff in music and movement sessions. Staff help children to understand the rules to follow, such as when they patiently explain that children need to line up by the door to be counted before they go outside to play.

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

- There is a joint management team that shares responsibilities. They offer supervision opportunities to support staff's professional development and well-being. Staff research subjects and then cascade what they have learned to their peers. This helps to improve their knowledge on topics, such as outdoor play, that contribute to improving outcomes for children. Staff report that they feel highly valued and part of a small, supportive team.
- Staff help children to understand what is acceptable behaviour in nursery, to prepare them for life in wider society. When children very occasionally display unkind behaviour to their friends, staff address it sensitively. They talk to children about how their actions might affect the other children. This has a positive impact on children, who learn how to cooperate and play with their friends.
- Staff provide children with a mix of adult-led activities and times when they can play independently. Overall, children are eager to join in with group activities, for example, most children enjoy listening to stories during a story-telling session. However, occasionally, adult-guided experiences go on for too long. Some children are not able to remain focused and deeply engaged and they become restless and distracted, limiting their learning.
- Staff plan focused activities that support children to learn new skills, such as learning to use scissors to make a Chinese lantern. Staff use hand-over-hand methods to help children learn how to use the scissors. However, at times staff

overly direct during adult supported activities. For example, when some children want to just snip at the paper, staff are occasionally more interested in ensuring the children make a Chinese lantern. This limits some children in developing their own creative thoughts and ideas, and practising using scissors.

- Staff support children's health and well-being. They work with parents to ensure that children's lunch boxes include healthy choices. Staff sit alongside children as they eat their snack. They talk to them about oral health, and the importance of brushing their teeth and eating fruit and vegetables. Children enjoy being active in the fresh air and take part in regular music and movement activities led by staff.
- Independence forms a major focus for the nursery curriculum. Staff motivate children to do things for themselves from a young age, for example, they encourage toddlers to wipe their nose, throw away their tissue, and wash their hands. Pre-school children pour drinks from a jug. Staff support children to manage their self-care skills, for example, older children put on their own coats. Staff start younger children's zips and encourage them to finish pulling them up.
- Staff appreciate the importance of supporting children in developing their language and communication skills. This is particularly relevant because a high number of children in the nursery speak English as an additional language. Staff model good language and often provide a running commentary on children's play. Staff support children to understand new words and instructions by speaking in their home language and reinforcing the words and sentences in English.

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:

- develop the planning and implementation of adult-led activities to support all children to be focused and concentrate
- strengthen practice so that staff support children to develop their own creative thoughts and ideas.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY498117
Local authority	Leicester
Inspection number	10316787
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	2 to 3
Total number of places	96
Number of children on roll	41
Name of registered person	AFFA Leicester Limited
Registered person unique reference number	RP911674
Telephone number	0116 3193580
Date of previous inspection	22 May 2018

Information about this early years setting

Little Companions Leicester registered in 2016 and is located in central Leicester. The nursery employs six members of childcare staff, of these, four hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3. The nursery opens from Monday to Friday, term time only. Sessions are from 8.30am until 3pm. The nursery provides funded early education for two- and three-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Sharon Alleary

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.
- Members of the management team and the inspector completed a learning walk together of all areas of the nursery and discussed the early years curriculum.
- Children and staff communicated with the inspector during the inspection.
- The inspector observed the quality of education being provided, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact that this was having on children's learning.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation of two activities with the acting manager.
- The inspector spoke to several parents during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The office manager showed the inspector documentation to demonstrate the suitability of staff.

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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