

Inspection of The Little Acorns Day Nursery

223 Wilmslow Road, Wilmslow SK9 3JZ

Inspection date: 14 March 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

There is an atmosphere of busy energy throughout the nursery. Staff help children to continuously extend what they know and can do. This includes making effective use of traditional tales. Two-year-old children feed porridge oats to toy bears. They eagerly remember and talk about who ate all of baby bear's porridge in 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears'. Staff help pre-school children to write a version of 'Jack and the Beanstalk' in their own words. The activity promotes children's ability to take turns and listen to each other. They gain confidence in themselves as storytellers. Pre-school children find out first-hand what would have happened to the gingerbread man if he had tried to swim across the river. The experiment encourages children to have ideas and try things out.

Staff are consistently caring and patient. Their manner promotes positive relationships and children show that they feel secure. Well-taught routines help children to understand the expectations for their behaviour at different times of the day. Children chat quietly and companionably at the play dough table. This promotes their social skills and friendships. Children rush around the outdoor area on ride-on vehicles. This promotes their stamina and coordination.

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

- The owners' vision for the well-established nursery is consistent and ambitious. The curriculum is founded on the principle that everyone's well-being matters. The purpose-built room for parents and carers helps them to feel welcome and involved. Managers and staff respect and value each other. They ably implement their intention to build children's confidence and self-motivation. This helps children to become successful learners.
- Managers observe staff's teaching and provide insightful feedback. They suggest practical, achievable steps that help staff to continuously improve their professional skills and knowledge. In-house training and coaching is effective. This is demonstrated when an assessment tool for screening children's language development is introduced. Managers model and moderate its use. This leads to comparable outcomes that inform precise next steps for children's learning.
- All children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), make good progress. Provision for children with SEND is a strength of the nursery. The special educational needs coordinator works in partnership with staff, parents and specialist professionals to assess and plan for children's learning. This helps to ensure a joined-up approach that promotes and celebrates children's achievements.
- Staff teach children different ways to use numbers. Children say that they must wait 10 minutes for the pizza in the role-play oven to be ready. This shows their understanding that numbers measure time. Children learn that rolling a die tells

them how many times to move their snakes and ladders counter. Pre-school children begin to estimate and compare quantities. They learn that a number can be divided in different ways.

- Managers communicate clear intentions for promoting children's language development. As a result, staff aim to use as many interesting and accurate words as possible, so that children's vocabulary continuously grows. Managers encourage staff to talk often and purposefully with children of all ages. The impact is that children learn to communicate confidently with adults and each other. This prepares them well for starting school.
- Staff encourage children to think and to solve problems. For example, children experiment with different jigsaw pieces until they find the one that fits. However, on occasion, adult-led activities limit children's own ideas and exploration. This is particularly the case when staff have already decided what the outcome of an activity or an investigation will look like on paper.
- Staff and parents share daily information about babies' routines and development. For example, everyone knows how much sleep babies have had at home and in the nursery. This helps them to plan for babies' care and to ensure their well-being. The consistently high standards of hygiene across the nursery help to promote children's health and safety.
- Parents praise the tasty meals served at the nursery. They say that children are encouraged to make their own decisions about which food and how much food they will eat. This promotes children's healthy attitude to nutrition and diet from a young age.

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:

- help children to find their own ways to represent their ideas, knowledge and discoveries.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY471924
Local authority	Cheshire East
Inspection number	10311661
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	0 to 4
Total number of places	130
Number of children on roll	174
Name of registered person	Alan and Veronica Walker Partnership
Registered person unique reference number	RP910901
Telephone number	0161 498 9251
Date of previous inspection	4 April 2018

Information about this early years setting

The Little Acorns Day Nursery registered in 2013 and is located in Handforth. The nursery employs 36 members of childcare staff. Of these, two hold qualifications at level 5, 22 members of staff hold qualifications at level 3 and six at level 2. The nursery opens from Monday to Friday, all year round. Sessions are from 7.30am until 6pm. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector
Susan King

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the nursery received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the nursery.
- The nursery manager and the inspector completed a learning walk of the pre-school. They discussed leaders' intentions for the curriculum.
- The inspector, the manager and the deputy manager carried out two joint observations of teaching.
- The inspector observed and spoke with children and staff.
- Parents spoke with the inspector. The inspector took account of their views.
- Examples of documentation were sampled and reviewed by the inspector. She checked evidence of the suitability of staff working in the nursery.

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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