

Inspection of LITTLE CHESTNUTS PRE-SCHOOL

Post Office, Village Hall, Church Lane, Toppesfield, Halstead CO9 4DR

Inspection date: 8 May 2024

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not applicable

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children are eager to enter the pre-school. They happily leave their parents or carers at the door and settle quickly into the day's activities. Children demonstrate their growing independence as they hang up their coats and put their lunch boxes away on the rack provided. Staff provide a calm environment where children are encouraged to express their feelings. For instance, children talk to staff about feeling nervous when they start 'big school'. This demonstrates the trusting relationships children have with familiar staff and know that their feelings are valid.

Children behave exceptionally well and have formed good friendships with each other. This is attributed to the consistent strategies staff use to help children understand the pre-school's rules and boundaries. As a result, children play harmoniously together. They share resources and are kind to their friends. Children invite other children into their play, demonstrating their close friendships.

The manager designs her curriculum to reflect the current interests of the children and to consider what it is that the children need to learn next. This helps all children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make progress from their starting points. Children particularly enjoy being creative and using their imagination during role play. Staff plan interesting activities to reflect this. For example, they provide a range of natural materials and children use them to create faces out of wood, feathers and pine cones.

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

- The manager and staff reflect on the environment to ensure that the activities and resources meet the children's interests and needs. Staff interact and model play to support children's learning. On occasions, some staff do not interact in a way that fully supports children to develop confidence in communicating with others. For example, during activities, staff do not focus their interactions to support those children who are less confident. As a result, some children do not always get the chance to talk or to share their thoughts and ideas. This means they do not consistently get the same rich learning experiences as others.
- Children are becoming increasingly independent. They make independent choices about what they play with and explore the resources that are available to them. Children confidently pour their own drinks and peel their fruit at snack time. Staff encourage children to develop self-care skills, such as using the toilet independently and washing their hands. This supports children to be ready for the next stage of their learning.
- Children clearly enjoy the time in the garden. Staff plan the outdoor environment to help children develop their gross motor skills. Children spend time climbing up the steps on the small slide and slide down with confidence. Children explore a

variety of sensory materials such as sand and play dough. This helps to develop children's fine motor skills.

- Staff promote children's interest in books and stories, reading books to children throughout the day. Children enjoy looking at books independently as well as sharing stories during group times. During these times, staff ask children questions, and children recall what they have learned. For instance, when discussing pictures of bugs and insects, children recall when a butterfly came into the pre-school garden. This helps to strengthen children's memory and make links to previous learning.
- Children demonstrate a growing vocabulary. Staff introduce new words to children as they play and learn, such as 'antenna', when children are looking at bugs and insects in the outdoor environment. Staff speak clearly and slowly to children, modelling the correct pronunciation of words to children as they play. More confident children are keen to share their experiences with visitors.
- The manager is supportive of her team. Staff report feeling happy in their roles and are confident to share their thoughts and ideas. The manager is currently counted in ratio most of the time due to issues with recruitment. This has an impact on her time to carry out her role to its fullest. As a result, the monitoring of staff's practice is not fully effective in helping all staff continually raise the quality of teaching to the highest level.

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:

- guide staff in supporting children who may have less confidence than others to be able to share their thoughts and ideas during group activities
- strengthen the monitoring of staff practice to help promote consistently high-quality teaching.

Setting details

Unique reference number	2685225
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10343221
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	26
Number of children on roll	21
Name of registered person	Little Chestnuts Pre-school CIO
Registered person unique reference number	2685223
Telephone number	07901880914
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

Little Chestnuts Pre School opened in 2022 and is run by a committee. The pre-school employs four members of childcare staff. Of these, three hold appropriate qualifications between levels 2 and 5. The pre-school operates on Mondays to Friday from 9am to 3pm, term time only. It provides funded early education for two-, three-and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Shelly McDougall

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 and inspector completed a learning walk together of all areas of the pre-school and discussed the early years curriculum.
- Children spoke to the inspector during the inspection.
- The inspector talked to staff at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The inspector observed the quality of education being provided, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact that this was having on children's learning
- Parents shared their views of the pre-school with the inspector.

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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