

Inspection of My Little Explorers Forest Nursery

Hillside Cottage, Toothill Road, Romsey SO51 9LN

Inspection date: 15 November 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 become immersed in the natural world as they take part in a broad range of exciting activities in this highly stimulating forest school provision. Staff teach babies and toddlers to notice seasonal changes. Older children spend their day outside in nearby woodland, closely supervised by staff. Specialist staff teach children how to work with forest materials using real tools. This supports children to grow an interest in nature, and they quickly develop in their confidence to explore.

Staff establish clear rules for children's safety in the forest school areas. For instance, children know that when an adult blows a special whistle, they must rejoin the main group. Staff use resources well to remind children of the rules. For example, they refer to a collection of wooden spoons; each with their own safety rule attached. This helps children know what is expected of them, and they respond immediately. Children also tell each other about how to behave. For instance, when children new to the setting get up to leave the circle too quickly, other children gently explain that they need to stay seated. Children develop excellent behaviour, and they learn how to keep each other safe.

Staff help children to develop secure attachments. Young children new to the setting establish themselves very quickly. They run to greet new friends and important adults. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) form close attachments with the adults who help them. These close bonds help children to improve their confidence and communication in the woodland setting.

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

- Leaders have planned an ambitious and well-sequenced curriculum that builds on children's skills over time. Teaching is adapted to the individual learning needs of children as they grow. For example, babies explore the topic of hibernation through sensory play. Toddlers look at hibernating animals and create hedgehogs out of leaves. Pre-school children research the different types of shelters that animals build, and they practise making their own dens. This topic-based learning enables children to revisit ideas in greater depth.
- Staff continually provide children with opportunities for physical development. They encourage children to investigate the forest floor and demonstrate how to use rakes safely to clear paths in the leaves. Staff ensure that trees are safe to climb and supervise children to do so. Staff support older babies to play confidently in the sand, providing them with tools for tipping and digging. Children are on the go throughout the day. This helps them to make good progress with their physical development while keeping them active.
- Staff use clear language as they demonstrate how to use real tools. For

example, they point out the 'teeth' of a saw and use rhythm and teamwork to show children how to cut logs safely. Staff teach children how to use vegetable peelers to whittle sticks and how to use hammers to knock nails into wood. As a result, children handle equipment with care and attention, while developing their hand-eye coordination.

- Staff frequently talk to children about what they see and do in the woodland. Consequently, children learn a wealth of knowledge about nature and the local environment. However, the curriculum around children's understanding of the wider world does not extend to consistently learning about different cultures and backgrounds. As a result, children do not always benefit from learning about the cultures and experiences of others.
- Staff teach children to manage risk well. They remind children to pay close attention to woodland trails that are thick with roots and mud. They encourage children to help with daily risk assessments, for example, checking that trees are safe for climbing. When toxic mushrooms grow nearby, staff cover the fungi with wire cages to enable children to see how they grow. Staff continually reduce risks while maintaining meaningful learning experiences for children.
- Staff are successful at focusing on the strong curriculum intent for promoting children's independence through exciting outdoor experiences. However, there are inconsistencies in the approach to achieving these aims at other times. For example, staff sometimes complete everyday tasks, such as tidying up their lunch dishes and dispensing soap for handwashing, without considering the benefit of encouraging children to master these tasks themselves.
- Leaders provide regular supervision and encourage staff to discuss how the setting might be improved. As a result, staff have recently introduced a new system of recording information about children's individual needs. This aims to improve the monitoring of children who need additional support.

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:

- enhance the curriculum for supporting children's understanding of the world to include learning about different cultures and communities and the lives of others outside of their own experiences.
- support staff to be more consistent in their approach to promoting children's independence.

Setting details

Unique reference number	2699668
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	10367882
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	1 to 4
Total number of places	30
Number of children on roll	51
Name of registered person	Victoria, Samantha Jane
Registered person unique reference number	RP907480
Telephone number	07766812541
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

My Little Explorers Forest Nursery registered in 2022 and employs a forest school ethos. It is located in Romsey, Hampshire. The setting operates Monday to Friday, from 8am to 6pm, for 50 weeks of the year. The setting employs 18 members of childcare staff. Of whom, one member of staff holds an appropriate early years qualification at level 5, one holds an appropriate early years qualification at level 4 and eight hold relevant childcare qualifications at level 3. The setting provides funded early education for children aged between nine months and four years old.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

David Watkins

Inspection activities

- Leaders showed the inspector the premises and surrounding grounds and discussed how they ensure that they are safe and suitable.
- The inspector talked to staff at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their views.
- Leaders joined the inspector on a learning walk and talked to the inspector about their curriculum and what they want the children to learn.
- Staff spoke to the inspector about how they support children with SEND.
- The manager and the inspector carried out a joint observation of an activity.
- Parents shared their views of the setting with the inspector.
- The inspector looked at 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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