

Inspection of Little Owls Woodland Preschool

Itchen Valley Country Park, Allington Lane, Southampton, Hampshire SO30 3HQ

Inspection date: 30 June 2025

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 confident in the knowledge of what is expected of them. For instance, they know where to store their belongings at the start of the day. Children listen attentively to the daily safety talk. They show an understanding of the rules and boundaries in place and follow these without hesitation. For example, they know a red sign or rope means stop. Children are highly independent. They freely access the forest setting, exploring, playing and learning with their friends. Staff support them to be capable and curious learners.

Leaders and staff plan a well-balanced curriculum that builds on what children know and can do. For instance, staff help children to communicate with words and then build on this as they teach children nature-based vocabulary. Staff support children to notice similarities and differences in wildlife using identification charts. Children learn the names of different birds and minibeasts, which they confidently tell their friends. Staff teach children to respect nature, such as by returning the centipedes and spiders they find to their homes under logs. Staff help children develop into kind and caring individuals.

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

- Staff support children's developing communication skills well. For instance, they repeat back what children say and help them to hear words correctly. Staff teach children new words as they play and when they read stories. Children learn about rhyme and join in excitedly with familiar phrases in books. Staff demonstrate to children how to communicate to their friends, such as by modelling words to use to ask for a turn. Children have good support to become confident communicators.
- Children benefit from being in the care of enthusiastic and knowledgeable staff. Children are motivated to join in and have a go. For example, staff teach children to handle a range of tools safely and confidently. Children learn to saw and drill wood as they design and make their own creations. They are visibly proud of their achievements. Staff help children to listen, follow instructions and develop many skills.
- Staff help children's physical development effectively. For instance, they provide a variety of resources to climb on and in. Children enthusiastically make treasure maps using pens and paper. Staff challenge older children to draw maps of the forest, encouraging them to give meaning to the marks they make. They have a secure understanding of how children learn and how they can promote this in a fun and engaging way.
- Staff plan a day for children that is packed with adventure in the forest. They encourage children to get deeply involved in their learning. For example, when hunting for minibeasts, staff help children to develop their attention as they

provide support and guidance to keep looking. However, at times, staff stop children during their learning. They have not fully considered the impact of daily routines that sometimes disrupt children as they play and learn.

- Children learn about their emotions. Staff help children to recognise what they are feeling and support children to say why they feel this way. For instance, children are excited to explore a new wigwam in the forest. Staff are swift to step in and help children who need more support to manage their behaviour. They offer children good support for their emotional development.
- Staff provide children with many positive interactions that support their learning well. For example, staff encourage children to explore and wonder at nature. They ask children questions and help them to make links to what they already know. When looking at life cycles of ladybirds, staff ask children to think about other life cycles they know and have experienced, such as butterflies. Staff offer children plenty of warm praise as they think and share their knowledge. However, at times, staff do not help children know what they have done well. They do not fully consider how to help children know why they are being praised.
- Leaders provide effective support for staff. For instance, they offer regular supervision meetings and development opportunities. Staff report that they feel welcomed, their voices are heard and they are part of a collaborative team.
- Staff build positive partnerships with parents. They provide parents with many opportunities to get involved in their children's learning. Parents report very favourably about the care staff provide. They comment on the great difference staff have made to their children's confidence and well-being.

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:

- refine the organisation of routines during the day to minimise disruption to children's learning time
- support staff to be more specific in their praise so children know and understand what they have done well.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY556184
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	10398774
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Day care type	Sessional day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	2 to 4
Total number of places	24
Number of children on roll	45
Name of registered person	Youth Options Centres Ltd
Registered person unique reference number	RP535058
Telephone number	01794525510
Date of previous inspection	8 November 2019

Information about this early years setting

Little Owls Woodland Preschool registered in 2018. It is an outdoor forest pre-school. The pre-school is open Monday to Thursday, from 9am to 3pm, during school term time only. Seven staff work with children, of whom five are qualified at level 3 and above. The pre-school is in receipt of early education funding for children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Emma Dean

Inspection activities

- The manager and deputy manager joined the inspector on a learning walk and talked to the inspector about the curriculum and what they intend for the children to learn.
- The inspector observed the quality of education being provided and assessed the impact this was having on children's learning.
- The inspector completed a joint observation with the manager.
- The inspector talked to the staff and children at appropriate times during the inspection.
- A meeting was held between the inspector, leaders and managers. The inspector looked at relevant documentation and saw evidence of the suitability of staff.
- Parents shared their views of the setting 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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