

Inspection of Little Acorns Day Nursery and Montessori School

208b Broadway, Yaxley, PETERBOROUGH PE7 3NT

Inspection date:

30 August 2024

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Overall effectiveness at previous
inspection

Outstanding

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is outstanding

Staff demonstrate a genuine warmth and sense of caring towards each child. They know children exceptionally well and use their expert knowledge to provide a welcoming, homely environment, where children play and learn happily. Children especially love exploring in the garden, where they show how well they have learned to collaborate and negotiate with one another. Staff know just when to join children in their games and show high-quality teaching as they playfully extend and enhance children's activities. This helps children to remain deeply focused and thoroughly absorbed in their chosen activities for a considerable time.

Staff implement a rich curriculum that embraces children's interests and builds on their abilities over time. They plan targeted activities to stimulate children's senses and develop the fundamental skills they need to make progress and learn. Children thoroughly enjoy undertaking these focused, yet playful tasks, in a calm and quiet area of the nursery. For example, children learn to carefully fill containers and use squeeze bottles to squirt water. This helps to develop children's muscles and refine their abilities to manipulate objects. Children flourish at the nursery and when the time comes, they have the skills and attributes they need for school.

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

- Leaders and managers have high expectations. They readily work alongside staff, which gives them an excellent overview of the daily achievements and challenges. This results in a shared determination by the whole team to do their best for each child attending. Staff thoroughly enjoy their work and are well supported to continually enhance their professional skills. Leaders and managers recognise and truly value each individual staff's contribution to the team. They know how, together, they can make a difference for the families in their community.
- Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive excellent support in their early years. Staff are highly skilled at using additional funding to implement tailored plans to make sure children can develop and feel emotionally secure in their surroundings. Partnerships with parents and other professionals are embedded in practice. Staff ensure everything is in place to support children's transitions to school, when the time comes.
- Staff plan and implement exciting group activities that capture children's attention effectively. Teaching is exceptional at these times. Children know what is expected of them and sit happily absorbed in what is happening. Children remember what they have learned before as they anticipate 'What's in the box?' or become very excited as staff demonstrate simple experiments. Staff recognise how, for some children, this is a great achievement as they are developing an ability to work alongside others.

- Staff demonstrate a consistently high level of teaching as they play with the children. They introduce new words into their interactions and give children the time they need to respond. Children who speak English as an additional language are supported very well and quickly copy what they have heard. For example, children point to the content of their toy trucks and say 'sand' for the first time.
- Staff understand the importance of children gaining independence and, from the start, teach children to do things for themselves. Younger children confidently feed themselves and are mastering the use of cutlery. Older children are accomplished and happily serve themselves and their friends with their chosen foods. Staff are excellent role models, resulting in children swiftly learning good manners and respect for one another. Children are confident and happy at nursery. They have firm attachments to their key person, and this gives them reassurance when they feel tired or simply need a cuddle.
- Parents are valued partners at the nursery. They share the highest of praise about the staff team and how they go 'above and beyond' of what is expected of them. Parents say they have regular feedback about their children's experiences and how approachable and caring the staff team are. Parents make reference to feeling 'like we joined a family', when their children first start attending.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts children's interests first.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY409528
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	10359932
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	2 to 4
Total number of places	64
Number of children on roll	70
Name of registered person	Little Acorn Day Nurseries Ltd
Registered person unique reference number	RP901388
Telephone number	01733 244000
Date of previous inspection	10 December 2018

Information about this early years setting

Little Acorns Day Nursery and Montessori School registered in 1995 and is privately owned. The nursery opens Monday to Friday from 8am until 5.30pm, all year round, except for bank holidays and one week at Christmas. It offers a breakfast club between 7am and 8am and late hours between 5.30pm and 6pm on request. The nursery provides funded early education places for two-, three- and four-year-old children. There are currently 19 staff working directly with the children. Of these, 16 hold relevant childcare qualifications at level 2 or above. The provider is a qualified Montessori teacher.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Jacqueline Baker

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 managers and has taken that into account in their evaluation.
- The inspector carried out a learning walk with the provider and manager and discussed how the curriculum is delivered.
- The inspector observed the quality of teaching during activities indoors and outdoors and assessed the impact this has on children's learning.
- The inspector spoke with the provider, manager, staff and children at appropriate times throughout the inspection.
- The inspector and manager completed a joint evaluation of an activity.
- The inspector looked at relevant documentation and evidence of the suitability of staff.
- The inspector spoke with parents and read emails sent for the purpose of the inspection. The inspector took account of parents' views.

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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