

Inspection of Little Squirrels Play Forest at Priory

The Priory Centre, Priory Plain, Great Yarmouth NR30 1NW

Inspection date: 8 March 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

Staff warmly welcome children and parents into the setting. Children rush in, keen to play and investigate the activities on offer. They form secure relationships with staff and look to them for comfort or reassurance when needed. Children demonstrate that they feel a sense of belonging and safety, showing the inspector their favourite toys and inviting her to play. Children show pride in their achievements, pointing out their artworks displayed on the walls. Staff interactions with children are nurturing and kind. They ask questions and listen to children's stories about their home lives. Staff remember children's important people and events such as holidays. This helps children to feel valued and encourages them to join in conversations.

Staff have high expectations for children. They talk knowledgeably about their recent assessments and where children are in their unique learning journeys. Staff promote positive behaviours in an age-appropriate way. For example, they calmly redirect challenging behaviours and offer safe alternatives. Children demonstrate curiosity and enthusiasm as they explore toys and equipment. Staff respond to their interests and provide equipment to build on these. For instance, they provide pull-along vacuum cleaners for children to play with. Children eagerly explore the buttons, wind the cable in and pretend to 'plug' them into carefully smoothed sand. They laugh delightedly as staff play along with their 'fishing' game, holding on to the end as they reel the cable in.

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

- The management team and staff are passionate about their work and the importance of early education in making a difference to children. They regularly access training and a digital library of professional development materials to build their knowledge of child development and teaching techniques. The provider has developed a robust induction and training programme to support staff understanding and practice.
- Staff know children well and use a range of assessment methods to understand their current development and skills. They use this knowledge to tailor their ambitious curriculum to children's unique needs and promote their progress. Staff support for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities is particularly strong. They develop close partnerships with parents and other professionals to create clear support plans and ensure children's needs are met to a high standard.
- Parents praise the 'caring, friendly' staff and how informed they feel about their children's progress and experiences in the setting. They talk about how kind staff are and how eager they are to help if parents need additional support. Parents also appreciate the resources and books on offer to take home.

- Children frequently practise doing things for themselves, such as pouring drinks and pulling their coat zips up. They select and transport a range of materials to recreate familiar routines. Children use dough and rice and different containers to 'cook dinner'. They scoop and pour rice, squash and shape dough then place finished dishes in the role play oven. Children check their creations, explaining that, 'It's not done yet' and describe the different toppings that their friends can choose from when it's 'time to eat'.
- The management team have a good awareness of their community and the needs of families using the service. They recognise key issues, such as difficulties accessing dental services in the local area, and work to reduce these barriers. For instance, staff collaborate with dental professionals to provide in-house dental check-ups.
- Children develop an understanding of the setting's rules as well as skills to keep themselves safe and play cooperatively with others. Staff support children's understanding of key routines with step-by-step instructions and encouragement. They help toddlers to push their sleeves up, make bubbles with soap and rinse their hands thoroughly before eating.
- Staff plan activities to support children's understanding of healthy habits. Children cut vegetables to make soup and confidently join in with a game to 'brush' laminated teeth boards clean. They enjoy going on walks in the local area and relish the range of equipment in the setting's garden area. Children strengthen their physical skills on stepping stones and a wobbly bridge, as well as taking time to rest with a book in the cosy area.
- Staff report feeling valued and well-supported by managers. The management team consider how to support individual staff needs and place a high value on well-being as well as personal development. They make use of different methods to evaluate the setting. However, plans for further improvement do not always focus incisively on areas generating the most impact for children.

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 self-evaluation to produce sharply targeted areas for further improvements that have the most impact on children's learning.

Setting details

Unique reference number	2656049
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10311622
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	2 to 4
Total number of places	68
Number of children on roll	50
Name of registered person	Little Squirrels Play Forest Limited
Registered person unique reference number	RP543578
Telephone number	01493842424
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

Little Squirrels Play Forest at Priory registered in 2021. The setting employs nine members of childcare staff. Of these, eight hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 2 or above. The setting opens from Monday to Friday during term time only. Sessions are from 8am to 4pm. From April 2024, the setting will open all year round, from 8am to 6pm. The setting provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector
Kate Oakley

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the provider received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the provider and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the provider.
- The manager took the inspector on a learning walk across all areas of the premises to explain how the early years provision and curriculum is organised.
- The inspector observed the quality of interactions during activities indoors and outdoors and assessed the impact this has on children's learning.
- The manager completed a joint observation and evaluation of an activity with the inspector.
- The inspector spoke to children, staff and parents at appropriate times during the inspection.
- The inspector looked at a sample of the setting's documents. This included evidence about staff suitability and training.

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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