

Inspection of Little Acorns Pre-School

Father's House Shaftesbury, Christys Lane, Shaftesbury, Dorset` SP7 8PH

Inspection date: 5 April 2022

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Outstanding

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children are warmly welcomed by caring staff as they arrive at the pre-school. Staff are excellent role models for the setting's Christian ethos of respect, tolerance and kindness. As a result, children are polite, share resources and take turns. They learn to be a good friend and value each other. For example, when they go home, they say 'it was lovely seeing you'. Children behave well. When disagreements occur, staff intervene quickly and appropriately.

Children learn to be independent. They lay the table for snack, pour their own drinks, tidy away resources and tend to their own personal needs. They learn that it is okay to make mistakes. When a child spills their drink, they are quickly reminded that 'even adults spill things sometimes'. Children persevere to solve problems. They shake a play till to remove a coin which is stuck. When this does not work, they use a pencil to remove it successfully.

Staff work closely with families to help children learn about their similarities and differences. Children learn about other cultures, religions and festivals. For example, a parent makes bread with the children and they learn that this is an Easter tradition in another country. Children talk with excitement about photos of their families and compare them to those of their friends.

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

- Staff provide a broad and well-balanced curriculum, guided by children's interests and next steps. There are separate sessions for older children and also mixed-age sessions. Children build on what they know and can do through a varied range of experiences which develop their skills for their move to school.
- Staff know the children very well. An effective key-person system ensures all children make progress. Staff work effectively with other professionals, including speech and language therapists and health visitors, to support children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).
- Children are imaginative. They enjoy role play, sensory play and creative activities. A child makes 'spaghetti' from play dough and then puts feathers in the top and says, 'Look! It's a boat!'
- Leaders use funding effectively to support disadvantaged children, providing resources and support at home and at pre-school. They assess the impact on children's learning and use this information to inform future spending.
- Staff actively promote children's communication and language skills. They provide a running commentary as children play, which helps children to build their vocabulary. Staff extend children's language, introducing new words, such as 'Bulgaria'. As a result, children use language well during their play.
- Children learn about number, shape, weight and measure. They join in with

number songs and rhymes, weigh objects on the scales in the garden and are encouraged to recognise shapes and numerals at snack time. As a result, children are beginning to use mathematical language.

- Children learn about the world around them. They enjoy bug hunting, grow vegetables and learn about the seasons. A local farmer and parent visits with a lamb and the children learn about new life and springtime. Children plant cress seeds. They learn what plants need to grow and then what the cress tastes like.
- Children enjoy being active in the gym and in the outdoor area. They confidently climb, jump and balance. They develop their small-muscle skills using a wide variety of mark-making tools. They manipulate 'gloop' with their fingers and squeeze and mould play dough.
- Children listen attentively during group activities and follow the rules and expectations of the setting. They concentrate for long periods, for example when completing jigsaws and creating Easter cards. Children confidently explore the pre-school and show pride in their achievements.
- Sessions follow a structure and routine to help prepare children for school. However, some children with SEND need more consistent support from staff to manage transitions from one activity to another.
- Feedback from parents is positive. Parents feel well supported by staff. They say that staff are 'caring and responsive' and that their children enjoy coming to pre-school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

All staff understand their responsibilities to help keep children safe. They know what to do if they have any concerns about a child's welfare. They have a secure understanding of the indicators that might suggest a child is at risk of abuse. Leaders work closely with other professionals to ensure the well-being of all children. Accidents are monitored and action taken to reduce risks to children's health and safety. Children with significant medical needs are well supported by care plans which all staff can implement in the event of an emergency. Safer recruitment procedures are followed to ensure that staff are suitable to work with children.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

To further improve the quality of the early years provision, the provider should:

- ensure that staff provide consistent support for children with SEND to help them transition effectively from one activity to another.

Setting details

Unique reference number	141104
Local authority	Dorset
Inspection number	10126083
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	26
Number of children on roll	34
Name of registered person	Father's House Shaftesbury
Registered person unique reference number	RP519807
Telephone number	01747 853715
Date of previous inspection	27 January 2016

Information about this early years setting

Little Acorns Pre-School registered in 2000. It operates from rooms in the Father's House situated in Shaftesbury, Dorset. The pre-school opens term time only, on Mondays and Fridays from 10am to 2pm, on Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 9.15am to 3pm, and on Thursdays from 9.15am to 11.45am. The pre-school receives funding to provide free early education for children aged two, three and four years. There are 11 staff employed. Two staff members hold qualified teacher status, one holds a foundation degree in early years, six staff hold childcare qualifications at level 3, one holds a level 2 qualification and one is unqualified. The staff team receives support from the registered person, who holds early years professional status.

Information about this inspection

Inspector
Lisa Large

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 practice manager and the inspector completed a learning walk together of all areas of the pre-school and discussed the early years curriculum.
- The inspector talked to staff at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their views.
- Children told the inspector about their friends and what they like to do when they are at pre-school.
- The inspector observed the quality of education being provided, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact that this was having on children's learning.
- The inspector spoke with the managers and the nominated individual about the leadership and management of the pre-school.
- The inspector spoke to several parents and grandparents during the inspection and took account of their 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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