

Inspection of Little Acorns Childcare

Beacon Church, Oakes Road, Bury St. Edmunds IP32 6PX

Inspection date: 15 July 2021

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is outstanding

Children who could not attend during the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic are eager to return to the setting. They show that they feel totally safe as they wave goodbye to their parents and warmly greet the staff. Children have remarkably high levels of curiosity and demonstrate excellent problem-solving skills. For example, they skilfully work out how to operate a clamp to secure a polystyrene block to the table. Their physical skills develop extremely well while using a range of real tools, bolts and screws to build their own complex models. This helps children to perfect their finer muscle movements ready for when they start writing.

Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are provided with highly attentive support to meet their complex needs. They rapidly learn to concentrate on tasks and increase their interactions with others. For example, children with SEND show exceptionally high levels of focus and attention while exploring toys with various textures and moveable parts.

Behaviour is exemplary. Children feel valued as individuals and take comfort in knowing that their key person is always close by for reassurance. From a young age, they show an instinctive desire to be kind, helpful and caring towards others. For instance, they offer genuine praise and warm encouragement to celebrate the achievements of others. Children get to meet people from the local community who speak different languages and follow different cultural practices. This helps to widen their awareness of similarities and differences in a highly meaningful way.

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

- The manager provides exceptional leadership and coaching for the committed staff team. Staff continuously reflect on their practice and strive to further their skills and knowledge. This leads to excellent improvements to the quality of education. For example, following training, staff successfully introduced a dedicated learning space to help children focus on activities with less distraction.
- Staff diligently research and develop a deep understanding of how children learn and make progress. Their interactions with children are highly focused on what they want them to learn next. They take an extremely creative approach in providing very rich learning experiences. This motivates children, including the youngest, to delve into activities and embrace new challenges.
- Promoting children's communication and language skills is given the utmost priority. Staff recognise that some children need more support in this aspect of their development. They seize every moment to inspire children to be involved in meaningful conversations and practise new words. As a result, children rapidly learn to use new vocabulary in the right situations and talk extremely confidently during group interactions.

- Staff have very high expectations for children. They constantly support children to enhance their already excellent independence skills. For example, they create a working kitchen area, with utensils, sink and electrical appliances, which is fully accessible to children, with supervision. Children are adept at managing all tasks at mealtimes and need no reminders to clear their plates or sweep up crumbs.
- Children delight in accessing books and listening to stories. The dedicated reading area is comfortable, inviting and very well used. Two-year-old children confidently select their favourite books and tell their parents about the stories. Staff are highly skilled in capturing children's undivided attention when they read stories to them. They read with great enthusiasm and encourage children to get fully involved, acting out different parts of the stories.
- Carefully planned settling-in procedures help staff to gather as much information as possible about what children can do before they start. Parents say that staff show a genuine commitment to meeting their family's needs. For example, staff help parents to link up with outside professionals to secure timely health assessments and additional funding for their children. This helps to ensure all children, including those with SEND, make excellent progress given their capabilities.
- Staff purposefully encourage children to consider and manage risks in a safe environment. For example, they prompt younger children to test out the safest way to approach the highest steps on the climbing frame. Children are quick to tell visitors about the safety cone and how this tells them they must be careful not to slip on the freshly washed floor.
- The manager and staff work tirelessly to maintain contact and offer financial and emotional support to children during the pandemic. They make the most of every opportunity to help parents access local support services. This includes the setting's well-used 'baby bank' which provides essential equipment and supplies for families who are experiencing difficulties.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The manager and staff share an unquestionable commitment to safeguarding children and protecting them from harm. They know how to identify concerns about a child's welfare and make sure outside agencies are quickly notified. The manager constantly reviews staff knowledge through regular training, staff meetings and supervision sessions. This high level of commitment continued throughout the pandemic. Staff kept in touch with all families and followed up any new safeguarding concerns. The manager is very enthusiastic about supporting all families, and particularly those who have experienced domestic violence. She completes advanced training to enable her to offer targeted support sessions for parents and diligently shares her expert knowledge with staff.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY294901
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	10132370
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	28
Number of children on roll	39
Name of registered person	Beacon Church Committee
Registered person unique reference number	RP905908
Telephone number	01284 756 588
Date of previous inspection	21 November 2019

Information about this early years setting

Little Acorns Childcare registered in 2004. It is situated in Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk. The setting employs nine members of childcare staff. Of these, all hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 and above. The setting opens from Monday to Friday during school term time. Sessions are from 9am to 3.30pm. The setting provides funded early education for, two- three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Sarah Clements

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the provider received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the provider and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the setting.
- The manager, deputy manager and inspector completed a tour of the setting and discussed how the early years provision and curriculum are organised.
- The inspector observed the quality of interactions during activities indoors and outdoors and assessed the impact this has on children's learning.
- The inspector completed a joint observation with the manager.
- The staff and children spoke to the inspector at appropriate times throughout the inspection.
- Parents shared their views with the inspector and these have been taken into account.
- The inspector looked at relevant documentation and reviewed evidence of the suitability of all persons working at the setting.

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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