

Inspection of Little Acorns Playgroup

Evershot Village Hall, The Common, Evershot, Dorchester, Dorset DT2 0JY

Inspection date: 20 June 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

Good

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is outstanding

Leaders and staff embed a well-sequenced and focused curriculum that is tailored to suit children's individual needs and interests. Younger children receive excellent support to build on their physical skills as they independently climb up and over the climbing frame. Older children show strong core strength when pulling themselves up and swing confidently from the rope swing. Staff use highly skilled interactions to extend children's learning. For example, during group times, they slowly break down various words such as 'sh-ee-p', and children recognise these sounds and develop words as they shout 'sheep'. Children are ready for their next stage of learning. Younger children develop their awareness of sounds by banging pots and pans together. Staff nurture these interests and begin to dance and clap. Children smile and continue to bang various objects. Children are confident, motivated and curious learners.

Staff are highly motivated and excellent role models. Children develop resilience and learn to manage conflict themselves. For example, children navigate taking turns, and staff ask, 'How are we going to solve this?' Children develop a strong sense of belonging and take tremendous pride in what makes them unique. For example, staff invite children to talk about their family, traditions and cultures. Children explore various languages and share key words with each other. Children show a 'can-do' attitude and persist when things become challenging.

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

- Leaders and staff meticulously plan a rich and challenging environment for children. They support children to consistently build on their knowledge and understanding of new concepts and ideas. For example, children roll dough and say, 'It's round.' Staff use this opportunity to introduce new mathematical language and concepts such as 'sphere' and '3D shapes'.
- Leaders collect detailed information about children's learning from parents and visits to other settings that children attend. This provides a good overview of children, forming robust starting points. Staff use assessments well to track children's development, enabling them to swiftly identify any gaps in learning. Leaders implement effective strategies to support children, helping to close gaps in learning. Staff make referrals promptly and provide exemplary support to all children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).
- There is a clear emphasis on developing children's communication skills. Staff use words such as 'bouncy' and 'stretchy' when exploring words with older children, for example. Younger children hold up an apple and say 'apple'. Staff expand their vocabulary as they say, 'Oh a juicy apple.' Staff use sign language to help children communicate in different ways. Leaders have implemented a

screening strategy that closely monitors children's speech and language. Staff share this with parents each term. Children are confident communicators.

- Children love exploring outside and have access to the garden daily. Staff take children on trips to various places around their community, such as walks around the local deer parks, the bakery and the church. Children develop their awareness of the world around them. They attend forest school each week and share this with children from the local school. Staff notice progression, particularly in children's social skills, as children engage and form relationships with the older children.
- Transitions are a key strength for this pre-school. Leaders place huge focus on ensuring that these are seamless for all children at various stages of their learning. They have recently started a toddler group, supporting younger children and parents when they first start attending the pre-school. Children benefit from the staff's excellent working relationships with the local school. Teachers visit children at the pre-school, and children attend transition days at the school. The Headteacher praises the positive impact that the pre-school has on children's school readiness.
- Staff report high levels of well-being. Leaders are extremely proactive and targets staff's training well to ensure that children benefit from this. Staff have recently completed Yoga training and have implemented this into their routines. This supports children to begin to self-regulate their emotions and feelings. Leaders acknowledge the importance of reflection. They are currently working on implementing a more targeted forest school curriculum, enhancing children's experiences further. The committee works closely with the manager and the staff to maintain and continuously improve standards.
- Parents praise the dedication and support they receive from the pre-school team. They value the team's commitment to their children's well-being and their 'collaborative ethos'. Staff provide support and advice for parents to enhance and continue their children's learning at home. For example, parents receive a monthly focus, including information on various topics such as healthy eating. Parents comment on the robust transitions and appreciate the wide variety of opportunities that their children receive to support their learning.

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	EY281575
Local authority	Dorset
Inspection number	10349795
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	1 to 4
Total number of places	26
Number of children on roll	25
Name of registered person	Little Acorns Playgroup (Evershot) Committee
Registered person unique reference number	RP901866
Telephone number	07985 435 958
Date of previous inspection	19 September 2018

Information about this early years setting

Little Acorns Playgroup opened in 1984 and re-registered at the current premises in 2004. The committee employs five members of childcare staff. Of whom, one member of staff holds an early years qualification at level 6, one holds a qualification at level 3, two hold a qualification at level 2 and there is one unqualified member of staff. The pre-school opens from Monday to Friday, during term-time only. Sessions are from 8.45am to 3pm. The pre-school provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Chelsea Woollard

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 joined the inspector on a learning walk and talked to the inspector about their curriculum and what they want their children to learn.
- The inspector observed the quality of teaching and carried out a joint observation with the manager.
- Parents and children spoke to the inspector during the inspection.
- The inspector observed children's activities and staff teaching, inside and outdoors.
- The special educational needs coordinator spoke to the inspector about how they support children with SEND.
- A meeting was held between the inspector and the management team to discuss leadership.
- The inspector looked at relevant documentation and reviewed evidence of the suitability of staff.
- The inspector spoke to staff at convenient times and assessed their safeguarding knowledge.

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.

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk

This publication is available at <https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2024