

Inspection of Little Raccoons Day Nursery (Apsley)

Stephensons Cottage, 306 Belswains Lane, HEMEL HEMPSTEAD, Hertfordshire HP3
9XE

Inspection date: 4 May 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good
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What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children build close relationships with staff, who know them well and are responsive to their needs. This helps children to feel safe and secure in their care. Staff provide a language-rich environment, introducing new words and sharing knowledge on children's topics of conversation. Children enjoy listening to stories and singing songs. Babies lift the flap in the book and giggle when staff reveal what is under it. Children eagerly investigate the activities provided outdoors and relish their time in the garden. They work together to make obstacle courses, using planks, tyres and slides. They are well supported by staff, who engage children in meaningful conversations, challenge their thinking and providing a running commentary as they make structures. Babies develop increasing physical skills, pulling themselves up to standing, using the well-positioned equipment.

Children behave politely and kindly towards others and quickly help their friends to overcome difficulties. They are confident to speak to visitors and staff. They show positive behaviours and respond well to staff's gentle guidance. Staff support children to develop independence. Older children serve themselves snack, pour their drinks and clear away after lunch. Children know that they need to wash their hands before eating and after wiping their noses.

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

- The manager has developed a curriculum that meets the needs of the children and ensures staff understand the intent of the activity. Parents receive regular updates and assessments of their child's learning and development. Staff keep parents up to date about their child's progress, which enables them to continue children's learning at home.
- Parents are extremely positive about the nursery and staff. They state children are eager to attend.
- Staff know children well and support them to develop new skills. However, they tend to follow the routines closely and do not always adapt their practice to meet the needs of the younger children. For example, staff do not always give enough time and support to help those children who are still learning to follow the routines. Sometimes, younger children become upset when lining up to come inside from the garden and while waiting for their lunch.
- Children participate in group times to practise their listening and concentration skills. They sit together and begin to retell the ending of a familiar story. Staff ask children to remember the previous day's learning about their favourite foods. Babies sit to listen to stories and songs. However, group times do not always fully meet the needs of all children. Occasionally, group times are too large or last for long periods. Consequently, some children lose interest and become distracted.

- Staff support children's health and well-being effectively. Children enjoy healthy meals and drinks. Lunch is a social occasion, and staff use these opportunities to discuss healthy eating with the children. Children happily talk about their food likes and dislikes.
- The manager and staff identify any children who will benefit from additional support. They use advice and support from professionals to plan specific support for children.
- The manager has considered ways to help keep children safe. Staff complete daily risk assessment checks and understand their responsibility to report any concerns to management. The manager has recently reviewed and made changes to the risk assessment for the garden and security gate. Staff ensure the areas are safe for children to play in. Staff keep children under close supervision as they play in the garden.
- Staff promote children's welfare. There are clear processes for recording and monitoring accidents and incidents in place. Parents are informed of any accidents and incidents within the nursery. This helps to keep children safe.
- Staff benefit from regular supervision meetings, where they can discuss their key children, their general well-being and professional development. The manager is reflective of her own and staff practice. She monitors staff through observations and uses this to help identify any specific training needs that staff might benefit from.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

All staff are suitably checked to work with children. Managers and staff are aware of their responsibilities to protect children from harm. They know the signs and symptoms of abuse and what to do if they have a concern about a child. The manager and staff are fully aware of the procedures to follow if an allegation was made against a colleague. All staff complete safeguarding and child protection training and are familiar with the setting's policies and procedures. Staff routinely check all areas of the setting to make sure they are safe for children to use.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- enhance staff knowledge and understanding of adapting practice to support younger children and meet their specific needs
- review the organisation of adult-led group times so that all children remain focused and engaged in their learning.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY498699
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10286577
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	0 to 4
Total number of places	36
Number of children on roll	58
Name of registered person	Little Raccoons Day Nursery (Apsley) Limited
Registered person unique reference number	RP901116
Telephone number	01442212555
Date of previous inspection	17 November 2017

Information about this early years setting

Little Raccoons Day Nursery (Apsley) registered in 2016. The nursery employs 10 members of childcare staff. Of these, five hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 or above. The nursery is open Monday to Friday, throughout the year, with sessions from 7.30am until 6.30pm. The nursery staff provide funded early education for three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Lisa Topham

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 and inspector completed a learning walk together and discussed how the curriculum is organised.
- The inspector observed the quality of teaching during activities, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact this has on children's learning.
- Children spoke to the inspector about the activities they were doing.
- The inspector held a meeting with the nursery manager. She looked at relevant documentation and reviewed evidence of the suitability of staff working in the nursery.
- A number of parents spoke to the inspector during the inspection, and the inspector 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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