



## Little Acorns Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	115273
<b>Inspection date</b>	06 February 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Rachael Williams
<b>Setting Address</b>	500 Locking Road, Weston-super-Mare, North Somerset, BS22 8QY
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<b>Registered person</b>	Sharon Maureen Arvin
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	Full day care

## ABOUT THIS INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality of childcare and, if applicable, of nursery education. The inspection was carried out under Part XA Children Act 1989 as introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000 and, where nursery education is provided, under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004; the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding; and, where nursery education is provided, the *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration or 1 April 2004 whichever is the later.

### The key inspection judgements and what they mean

*Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality*

*Good: this aspect of the provision is strong*

*Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound*

*Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough*

For more information about early years inspections, please see the booklet *Are you ready for your inspection?* which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).

## THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are outstanding. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are outstanding.

### WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Little Acorns Pre-School is a privately owned group and was registered in 1995. The pre-school operates from within the Seventh Day Adventist Church in Worle near Weston-Super-Mare in North Somerset. The pre-school uses the main church hall with direct access to the kitchen and male and female toilets. The outside play space leads directly from the main hall at the side and rear of the premises.

The pre-school offers care Monday to Thursday from 08:30 until 12:30 and 13:00 until 17:00; and on Fridays from 08:30 until 13:00 term time only. Children attend from a wide geographical area. There are currently a total of 60 children on roll, of whom there are 58 in receipt of early years funding. The group offers care to children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

There are five members of staff who work directly with the children; four of whom hold recognised early years qualifications. The pre - school works closely with Mendip Green First School. It receives support from the local authority and the Pre - School Learning Alliance.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is outstanding.

Children thrive because staff follow highly effective procedures and practices which meet the children's physical, nutritional and health needs. Daily routines ensure the children remain healthy, such as hygienic nappy changing arrangements and cleaning regimes where children are protected from the cross contamination of germs. Children show good awareness of their own personal needs, for instance visiting the toilet facilities and washing their hands independently.

Children are effectively supported by staff's good knowledge of administering first aid. Staff's appropriate paediatric training is regularly updated and accident records are confidentially completed to share with parents. Efficient systems ensure that appropriate consents are gained from parents to administer medication and to seek emergency treatment or advice which further supports children's well-being. Comprehensive information is given to parents regarding children's health issues, such as exclusion times relating to childhood ailments, thus reducing the possible risks of illness or infection.

Children are introduced to a healthy lifestyle through a range of nutritious snacks, such as a selection of fruit followed by a biscuit. The cookery club ensures children and parents have excellent knowledge of healthy eating and the hygienic preparation of food. Special dietary needs are well catered for and activities adapted to ensure all are included. Children remain hydrated during the sessions as they are offered a drink with their snack and can access water independently or with help from an adult.

Children benefit from daily opportunities to be active as there is a wide range of stimulating equipment to effectively promote their physical development. For example, children develop large muscle skills when sliding and climbing on the wooden frame. Children move in a variety of ways, for instance when moving under the cargo net or crossing the balance beam. Children have excellent bodily awareness and acknowledge the effects exercise has on their bodies, for instance how they get out of breath and how their heart beats faster. Children have excellent hand/eye coordination as they are given every opportunity to develop new skills, such as using knives to chop and prepare ingredients when cooking.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is outstanding.

The spacious physical environment is organised exceptionally well inside to meet the care, learning and developmental needs of the range of children attending. Consequently, children can move safely and independently. Children are given clear direction, for instance vigilant staff observe children running around the play space and intervene to provide a clear explanation

as to how this could pose a risk to themselves, thus children are being encouraged to develop responsibility for their own safety. Children are closely supervised and staff's excellent deployment effectively supports children's free choice.

When entering the provision children can independently access an excellent range of stimulating and challenging toys and resources. Additional high-quality resources are readily available and rotated throughout the session to ensure children are engaged with interesting, safe and hygienic equipment. The premises are warm and welcoming. For instance, vibrant three-dimensional displays provide a backdrop of colour as parents and children are greeted by enthusiastic staff.

Staff implement regular, effective safety procedures, such as risk assessments to maintain children's safety. For example, the outside area is cordoned off in order to protect children from a large church window. Regular fire drills ensure that children are able to evacuate the building safely and quickly in the event of an emergency. Consequently, children have good awareness of how to keep themselves safe. Children are fully protected within the secure environment and there are effective procedures in place to ensure children are collected by a responsible adult.

The children's welfare is supported very well as all staff have a secure understanding of child protection issues and procedures. Informative literature is readily available which includes appropriate contact details to ensure children's well-being if a concern should arise.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is outstanding.

Children thrive in the well-organised, child-centred environment. Children enjoy and achieve very well as they are well supported by interested and committed staff whose interaction is excellent. Children are engaged in a wide selection of experiences which are robustly planned. There is a good range and balance of child initiated and planned activities to maintain children's attention. Consequently, they enjoy themselves and are extremely motivated. There is a vast range of stimulating resources which are easily accessible for children to develop their independence. Staff are knowledgeable of children's interests and rotate toys and resources effectively to engage children further.

Excellent caring relationships have been established to positively support children's development in the warm and welcoming environment. A dynamic learning environment has been established where practitioners deploy themselves effectively to support children's developing needs. Communication skills are extremely well supported through high-quality adult/child interactions. For example, children are thoroughly engaged while children wash their hands ready for snack; one practitioner engages a group of children in sharing a story using the illustrations to effectively question and engage the children, another engages children in meaningful conversations relating to their experiences and another extends children's numerical knowledge whilst queuing for the toilet facilities.

Nursery education.

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Children make rapid progress towards the early learning goals in all areas of their development, according to their capability and starting points. Through effective communication with parents, observations and tracking children's attainment on entry to the provision is thoroughly assessed to enable a foundation of learning to be established. Robust planning systems ensure that children have an excellent balance of experiences to develop even progression in all areas of learning. Skilled practitioners adapt the flexible planned opportunities to include children's interests, for instance the children were highly motivated by the story of Elmer, consequently practitioners adapted the planning to include a pattern making, patchwork Elmer. Thorough systems of observation and recording ensure that staff have comprehensive knowledge of each child's individual stage of development. This knowledge is used very well by staff to help plan interesting and stimulating activities that provide challenge, meeting individual children's needs and ensuring they make extremely good progress.

Teaching is consistently inspiring and challenging for all children. Staff demonstrate an excellent knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum and are clear about the learning intentions of activities. This high level of confidence in their knowledge is used to excellent effect when children develop activities independently. For example, whilst children develop their imagination in freely creating weather pictures, practitioners are confident to identify how children can be effectively challenged through relevant questioning. Children confidently develop new skills, such as using scissors to cut shapes to represent the lightning and, through effective communication from practitioners, are able to reflect on the process and modify their creations.

The dynamic learning environment enables children to access activities that interest them independently. Children are highly motivated and keen to learn. Staff demonstrate each activity without being prescriptive. For example, children are offered a selection of paints and the practitioner offers the children a clear explanation on how the paints can be mixed in the palette to create new ones. The high-quality interaction offered to the children encourages their development. Excellent open ended questioning challenges the children further, for instance how do you make green? What happens if.....?

Children are developing excellent communication skills. They are exceptionally confident communicators who enthusiastically share their thoughts and ideas with each other and with adults. They are supported well to use descriptive language and to reflect on their experiences, such as sharing a family event and showing what was worn. They are skilled and interested in making marks and writing for a variety of purposes, and most children are clearly forming letters. For example, they label their own work and they practise their skills during their play, such as writing a shopping list during their imaginative play. Daily routines are used well to promote numerical skills. For example, children confidently count how many children are present and calculate how many there would be if one more arrived. Children competently compare groups, for instance how many more girls there are than boys and how many cows are needed to balance the scales.

## **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is outstanding.

Children thrive in the welcoming environment where excellent caring relationships have been established. Friendly and enthusiastic staff support the children who play a full part in the nursery. Staff value and respect children's individuality and have good knowledge of their needs and family backgrounds. Children have exceptionally good self-esteem and are confident and settled. For instance, children have a very good sense of belonging and trust as their creations are acknowledged as they confidently share them with all practitioners who then display them effectively to create a vibrant environment. All children receive excellent support in the fully inclusive setting. Children with learning difficulties and/or disability are positively supported by a knowledgeable and confident team to ensure their welfare and development is promoted well.

Children are actively involved in developing their awareness of the world in which we live through celebrating a range of festivals and celebrations. Their curiosity is enhanced by regular opportunities to observe nature, such as exploring the colours of the autumnal leaves. There is a very good selection of toys, resources and positive images to develop children's understanding of the diversity in our society. Regular visitors, such as the fire brigade, enhance children's understanding of the community. This positive approach fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Children's behaviour is exemplary. Children are clear on routines and are able to follow simple instructions confidently, for instance when they hear the bell they know it is time to help tidy up. Children relish the responsibility of tasks, such as laying the table for tea. Older children are aware of expectations and support the younger ones to behave well. Excellent relationships have been established between the children, for instance a child willingly helps another to tidy away his jigsaw. Clear and consistent behaviour management strategies maintain a stable environment.

Partnership with parents is outstanding which contributes significantly to children's well-being. Children benefit from the superb relationships established with the parents by practitioners. For instance, there is a regular exchange of information to ensure children's individual needs are planned for and developed. Parents receive a wealth of relevant information relating to the provision for their child via the notice board, comprehensive newsletters and informative key worker discussions. Children's progress and achievements are shared regularly. For example, termly written reports inform parents of children's progress in each of the areas of learning. Parents are actively involved in children's learning as they are able to contribute to these reports and provide objects to support the interesting topics.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is outstanding.

Children are cared for by well-trained, skilful and experienced early years practitioners. Practitioners use their knowledge exceptionally well to ensure that children make excellent progress in all areas of their care and learning. Practitioners are proactive in creating a learning environment which effectively supports children's development. Space is maximised to provide

children with a wealth of experiences which enable them to move freely and safely. Key worker groups are used effectively to ensure children are confident and settled.

The well documented operational plan is regularly updated to provide children with a stable environment in which they become independent, safe and healthy learners. Clear recruitment, suitability and induction arrangements ensure children are cared for by appropriate adults. Children are closely supervised and ratios are effectively monitored through the use of a well thought out registration system.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Leadership and management is outstanding. The owner of the pre school provides an exemplary role model, and shared involvement in planning provides a dedicated, highly motivated team. Practitioners show strong commitment to children's achievement and development, which is demonstrated by the children's enthusiasm for, and involvement in their learning. There is an ethos of reflective practice throughout the setting with staff making excellent evaluations of what they do in order that children continue to flourish. Informal, daily meetings ensure continuity in the high-quality care and nursery education. For example, this informal time is used proactively to monitor and evaluate children's progress. Practitioners' individual skills are strongly acknowledged and used to provide inspiring activities.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last inspection a recommendation was raised relating to partnership with parents. This has been successfully addressed.

The setting have been proactive in adapting the Preschool Learning Alliance policies and procedures to ensure parents are fully informed of the complaints process, including information on how to contact the regulator. Consequently, a stable environment has been established for children where their safety and welfare is paramount.

### **Complaints since the last inspection**

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaint record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

## **THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION**

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are outstanding. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are outstanding.

## WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

### **The quality and standards of the care**

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of care are outstanding.

### **The quality and standards of the nursery education**

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of nursery education are outstanding.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education* (HMI ref no 2599) which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)