

# Little Acorns Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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**Unique Reference Number** 102788  
**Inspection date** 13 June 2007  
**Inspector** Valerie Button

**Setting Address** Camelford Hall, Clease Road, Camelford, Cornwall, PL32 9PL

**Telephone number** 01840 212114

**E-mail**

**Registered person** Little Acorns Nursery

**Type of inspection** Integrated

**Type of care** 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 satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

### WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

There has been a playgroup in Camelford for more than 30 years. A committee of parents, and interested others, manages the provision. It was decided to change the name of the group to Little Acorns Nursery in 2006. The nursery operates from designated rooms, in Camelford Hall. Accommodation comprises a play room, a quiet room, a lobby area, toilet facilities and office areas. The kitchen used is the main hall kitchen.

There are currently 23 children, aged from 2 to 5 years old, on roll. This includes 13 children who receive funding for their nursery education. The setting supports children with disabilities and additional learning needs, as well as children for whom English is an additional language.

The nursery opens during school term times; currently from 09.00 to 15.00 on Mondays and Fridays and from 09.00 to 13.00 on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. On Thursday morning a 'Stay 'N' Play Brunch Club', managed by the committee of the nursery, runs in the main hall; staff aim to take it in turns to join this group for part of the morning.

There are four staff currently working at the nursery. The manager and the deputy manager of the group both have NVQ qualifications to Level Three; another member of staff is qualified

to Level Two; another is working towards a Level Three qualification. The setting 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 satisfactory.

Children's health is safeguarded by staff who hold current first aid certificates, complete accurate accident and medical records and carefully note information about children's health and dietary needs. The premises are spotlessly clean.

Children are encouraged to become independent with self-help skills, for example, washing their hands after visiting the toilet or before eating. They are taught the reasons why this is important. However, facilities do not support good hand-washing procedures.

Children enjoy healthy snacks. They enjoy making 'smoothies', delighting in preparing the fruit and operating the 'smoothie maker'; such activities teach children the importance of a healthy diet, for example, by eating a variety of fruits. Children benefit from ready access to drinks of water, which they can freely enjoy throughout the sessions.

Children benefit from fresh air and exercise. Use of the outside play area is maximised for large physical development activities. There is good teaching in this area from adult-led activities and children also enjoy good opportunities to freely practise their skills.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children enjoy playing in premises that are well-maintained, both indoors and out. They benefit from the very hard work undertaken to make the outside play area safe, for example, with safety surfaces and large shades to shelter under from sun or rain. Premises are well-organised to ensure they are safe for children's play. Good systems are in place to ensure that play resources are clean and safe for children's use. Staff supervision of the children is very diligent. Regular risk assessments are undertaken and there is a daily checklist to be followed, in order to ensure that there are no hazards present. Children are taught how to keep themselves safe, for example, by not running indoors and by using scissors safely. All these measures support the children's safety very well. There are effective systems to record visitors to the setting, and staff are very vigilant. However, the nursery has not yet fully considered whether sufficient procedures are in place to prevent unwelcome intruders entering the premises unnoticed. Good initiatives are undertaken, with children and parents, to highlight safety issues and develop safety measures, for example, 'Child Safety Week' includes opportunities to learn about beach safety, fire procedures and safety in the home. Local police and paramedics visit and there is a fun quiz for parents on safety matters.

Children are well-protected. The consistent staff team knows children and their families well. Child protection procedures and guidance are in place. There is a designated member of staff with responsibility for this area and staff are aware of their responsibilities.

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

The provision is good.

Children have a good time in the setting. They settle quickly to play with the well-presented resources. Young children become confident and are helped by sensitive, caring and well-organised staff. Good use is made of the Birth to three matters framework when planning activities for young children and when assessing their progress. Children develop good attitudes to learning. All children enjoy the welcoming atmosphere and the well balanced programme of activities provided.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are making good progress towards the early learning goals in all six areas of learning. They are supported by a well-led and extremely enthusiastic staff team who have a secure and thorough understanding of the Foundation Stage Curriculum. Staff plan a stimulating environment and present a balanced curriculum which provides suitable challenge to all children. They use appropriate methods to help children to learn; for example, presenting activities to children on a one-to-one basis or in small groups; this makes very good use of staff time and resources. Staff are aware of the need to ensure that good use is made of the first part of the sessions, when they feel children are particularly receptive to learning. The first parts of sessions offer children excellent learning experiences, supported by very good teaching. Good efforts are made to vary activities to match children's varying levels of ability. However, some other parts of the session do not sustain all the children's interest, this is with particular regard to whole group times. Children benefit from the well implemented assessment system. The frequent, relevant observations are used to complete useful assessments of the children's learning and progress and also to inform the immediate planning.

Children make marks and write in many of their freely chosen activities, for example, in the 'Travel Agent's' role play area or outside; examples of their drawing and writing skills demonstrate their good attainments in this area. Children recognise the sounds that letters make and link them to the initial letter of a range of items, for example, in small groups, children hide and find items beginning with a particular letter sound. Group story sessions are sometimes less well-planned and provided. Children develop their mathematical understanding frequently during every session, for example, children learn about numbers and calculating through using a 'fishing' game or by grouping materials and using vocabulary such as 'how many more?', 'how many altogether?'. Children think about the weather and spontaneously sing songs about the rain. They also learn about their local environment by going on walks and having visitors to the setting. Children enjoy role-play. They develop their small muscles effectively, for example, by using scissors skilfully and by manipulating play dough. They make very good use of the outside play area for exercise and various large physical activities, such as the use of wheeled toys. A great deal of work has been undertaken to ensure that the outside play area provides a very stimulating environment, with good opportunities for children to learn and develop in all six areas of the curriculum.

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

The provision is good.

All children are welcomed and their company is greatly enjoyed by adults who offer good role models to children through their relationships with each other. Staff know the children in their care very well; most have previously attended the 'Stay N Play' group run at the hall so families

already know each other; this eases children's transition to being left alone at the setting. Good premises and good record keeping of the children's progress both support the care of all children and their individual needs very well.

The nursery works in partnership with local authority support services, in order to meet the specific needs of children attending with disabilities. Children receive one-to-one support if necessary and there are good systems in place to ensure that the staff team communicates and works together to facilitate children's progress and development. The nursery is currently developing a sensory area, in order to enhance their provision.

Children respond well to good behaviour management and plenty of praise and encouragement. They are given clear expectations and the lively programme of events retains their interest. Simple rules for good behaviour are displayed and often referred to. Children demonstrate their ability to cooperate with others on many occasions, for example, when making good, independent use of the computer. Children are able to concentrate at ongoing activities very well, for example in lone play with the play dough, or with an adult to make 'smoothies'. Some children exhibit quite challenging behaviour. Staff demonstrate good behaviour management techniques and work well, in partnership with each other, to offer explanations and sanctions if necessary. Children are encouraged to consider the needs of others. They show wonder and fascination, for example, when making the 'smoothies'. They learn about festivals in other cultures. They benefit when people, such as police officers or paramedics, visit the nursery. In all these ways children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Children benefit very much from the warm welcome their parents receive at the nursery. Information is shared efficiently regarding children's day-to-day care, for example, at the beginning and end of sessions. This means that children are cared for in accordance with their parents' wishes and their individual care needs are well-met. Parents are offered appointments with staff, in order to discuss their children's learning and progress. Parents receive good written information, for example, in monthly newsletters. Curriculum plans are displayed for them to see and notice boards in the lobby area are very informative. Children may borrow books from the nursery to enjoy at home. All these measures support children's continuity of care very well.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children play in a well organised setting where they are cared for by staff who are enthusiastic and interested in their work with children. Dedicated staff are committed to ongoing professional development and this enhances the experiences of the children in their care. Rooms, and the outside play area, are well organised to provide a pleasant environment and activities are interesting, and exciting. Good ratios are maintained to ensure that children receive prompt support when they need it. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

The nursery is managed by a voluntary committee. Committee members have been checked for their suitability. However, the committee has been without a chairperson, or a person nominated by the committee to be a point of contact for Ofsted, since the resignation of the previous chairperson. Ofsted, as the regulator of the provision, has not been informed about this significant change in the management of the nursery. This is a breach in regulations. The nursery has been waiting for their annual general meeting, to be held at the beginning of July, to update Ofsted about the new management committee, the new chairperson, and the

nominated person. However, in the interim, children have been placed at potential risk, in the event of a significant event at the nursery and the need for investigations into matters. All other measures and documents needed to support the children's care and welfare are soundly organised.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is good. Staff have regular meetings to monitor the quality of provision, for example, daily meetings to update children's records and evaluate the sessions, and weekly staff meetings. Staff are reflective practitioners and their commitment to ongoing improvement evidences their dedication to providing quality care and education for the children. The staff team is well-led. The setting receives support from local authority advisers, which most recently has focused on the provision made for children with disabilities or additional learning needs.

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

At the last inspection the nursery was asked to ensure that at least one member of staff with a current first aid certificate is present at every session. All staff now hold appropriate first aid qualifications. Children's health care and safety have been improved as a result. They were also asked to demonstrate how children access clean warm water in the toilet facilities while maintaining safety at all times. Some progress has been made with this. Staff report that a device has been fitted to thermostatically control the water temperature and ensure that water emanating from hot taps does not become too hot. The reality is that water is sometimes light brown in colour. It is still sometimes too hot to be comfortable for children to use, though it is certainly not hot enough to burn them. Thus staff report that children do not like using the hot tap. Children are taught the importance of hand washing after using the toilet and before eating. They are monitored to ensure that soap is used. However, facilities still fail to support good hand washing procedures for children and this aspect of provision therefore remains a recommendation to be further addressed at this inspection, since hand washing is the single most important action that everyone can undertake to reduce the transmission of infection.

In order to improve the nursery education for children, the nursery was required to continue to develop planning to show how more able children can be extended and all recording is consistent. Both planning and record-keeping are good and support staff very well in delivering the curriculum to children. Staff have made good improvements to identifying children who require more challenge or support in their learning. Their observations of children's learning and development are very regular and consistent and influence planning for individual children. All children benefit from the ways in which plans and activities are varied to ensure that all tasks, except for whole group sessions, are now well-matched to their different ages and stages of development.

### **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 complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

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### WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

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

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- improve hand washing facilities for children; give increased attention to teaching children good hand washing procedures
- review security arrangements at the premises; conduct a risk assessment and ensure that people are unable to enter the premises unnoticed
- inform Ofsted promptly about any changes to people involved in the running of the nursery.

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

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- develop further the teaching and delivery of whole group learning sessions, in order to ensure that all children benefit from them.

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)