

# Little Acorns Shireoaks

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	253063
<b>Inspection date</b>	16 January 2008
<b>Inspector</b>	Judith Rayner
<b>Setting Address</b>	Brancliffe Lane, Shireoaks, Worksop, Nottinghamshire, S81 8PW
<b>Telephone number</b>	01909 506666
<b>E-mail</b>	
<b>Registered person</b>	The Trustees of Little Acorns Shireoaks
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	Sessional 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 good. 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 Shireoaks opened in 1984 and moved to the current premises in 2000. It operates from a purpose built building on the school site of St Lukes in Shireoaks, near Worksop, north Nottinghamshire. A maximum of 26 children between the ages of two and eight years may attend at any one time. Currently only the pre-school opens each weekday from 09.00 to 11.30 during term time only. Children between the ages of two and five years attend. All children share access to a secure outdoor play area.

There are currently 33 children on roll between the ages of two and five years. Of these, there are 21 three- and four-year-olds who receive funding for nursery education. Children come from Shireoaks and the surrounding areas. The pre-school employs five staff. Four staff, including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications. The setting receives support from the local authority.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is good.

Children's health and welfare is met well. This is because the staff ensure they follow good health and safety policies and procedures and implement them into the daily tasks and routines. Children learn about their personal hygiene. They have a good understanding of the importance of washing their hands before they have food and after using the toilet. They know that they wash their hands to wash away the germs so they are not sick. Children's immediate medical needs are met effectively. Staff quickly and appropriately respond to any accidents. Staff follow first aid guidance and use a cold compress to soothe the injury, ensure the child is comfortable whilst talking and reassuring the child in a calm and sensitive tone. They monitor the child and undertake records of the accident and then share this with the parents and carers when they collect the child. Signatures are obtained of the adults involved in the care of the child to document who has been informed.

Children are offered nutritious snacks which are sufficient in quantity. A good varied choice of light snacks is available throughout the week which ensures children are given a good choice of food. Children learn the conventions of sitting at a table socialising with their peers and adults. A staff member sits at the table monitoring who has had snack and who has not. All children are encouraged to try the food such as raisins, crackers and warm Naan bread. Children know when it is snack time and freely make choices in whether they wish to eat at the beginning of snack time or later. However, when they do choose to have food their independence skills are less promoted because staff generally hand out the plates, butter crackers and pour out milk or water.

Children benefit from time outside. They run around, use low climbing and plant bulbs in the soil. Good planned activities ensure children experience a varied and interesting range of play to enhance both their large and small muscles during inside and outdoor play. Children are very comfortable and relaxed as they move freely between being inside and outside. They happily put their coats on and play in the rain looking up at the sky and feeling the rain drops on their faces.

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

The provision is good.

Children, parents and carers are warmly welcomed in to the setting. An extensive range of information relating to childcare issues and how the setting operates is displayed around the room. Children's art work and activities are displayed valuing what children do and create a bright and colourful environment for them to play and learn. For example, children have planted beans in clear plastic bags and attached them to the windows so they can watch their own beans grow. Children comfortably and freely move around the rooms and between indoors and outside. Children help tidy away the toys and games because staff have ensured that the storage used is low-level. This supports children in developing their self-help skills and taking responsibility to care for what they play with. Children are interested and motivated. They are engaged in their play. This is because the toys, activities and resources are in a good state of repair, age-appropriate, safe and suitable for children. Children are challenged and curious because staff present activities attractively and with interest.

Risks to children are effectively minimised because the staff are vigilant in ensuring hazards are identified and made safe. For example, they adapt and change the planned play when using balancing beams outside and because it was raining, the beams would become slippery, so the play activity was changed. A good security system in place ensures children are protected and unable to leave the setting unsupervised. Adults can not gain entry unless authorised by a member of staff and all visitors sign the register book. Children learn what to do should they need to leave the setting quickly because they participate in regular evacuation procedures. Clearly written policies and procedures support and develop staff knowledge on ensuring children are safe.

Children are effectively safeguarded because staff are knowledgeable of the signs and symptoms of possible child abuse. They are confident in knowing what procedures to follow should they have any concerns regarding a child in their care. Staff see their role in protecting children as fundamental and undertake training to keep abreast with current legislation policies and procedures. Clearly written guidelines for the nominated person ensures they have a good understanding of their role and responsibility in safeguarding children.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Children are very happy, settled and enjoy their time at the setting. They confidently engage in activities and explore with excitement and enthusiasm. They try new and challenging activities with confidence. Staff are excellently skilled and supportive as they supervise from a distance and intervene when necessary. Good relationships are forming between adults and children. For example, children confidently ask questions and happily show adults what they have made or done. They share information and events about what has happened at home. Very good relationships are also developing between children. They play cooperatively. For example, four children each have a tractor and place them on the top of the water tray. Discussions are held between the children deciding who is getting the water and who will be adding the bubbles. They put the water and bubbles in the grooves of the water tray and push their trucks around the tray, taking turns and racing one another. Children use resources well outside. They enjoy an activity trying to find objects to stick together. They excitedly call a staff member informing them that they have found some metal calling it a 'metal collector'. The staff member praises the children on their finding and explains that it was a good word to use and another name to describe the object they used to find other metal objects is a 'magnet'. The children happily continued exploring and finding more metal objects.

Children play with a very good range of toys, resources and activities that enhance their all round development. This is because staff have a very sound knowledge of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and confidently implement it to ensure children progress very well in their development and skills. Planning for activities is very well organised and identifies the learning intentions for each child. Staff undertake observations and record each child's steps of development in their own development files. The records are shared with parents and carers identifying how their child is progressing. Children develop their independence skills. They make choices in their play deciding whether to play inside or out and what toys they wish to play with. Children's learning is wonderfully extended. This is because staff have excellent knowledge, experience and the confidence to empower and support children to use their all round skills. For example, staff draw children's attention to the weather and large amounts of rain the country has recently experienced. They talk about the floods and the impact this has on children and their families. Children then initiate their own play from the earlier discussions and play with water and tractors acting out events discussed with the staff.

## Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Children are excited, motivated and confident. They make excellent links in their learning. This is because staff have secure knowledge of the Foundation Stage and how children learn effectively. Children thrive as a result of clear planning and assessment systems and very effective teaching methods. Play plans show how all areas of learning are promoted and how learning objectives are identified. Observations and assessment records clearly show children's progress along the stepping stones and are used effectively by staff to identify the next steps of learning for each child. This provides a secure and sound foundation for the scaffolding of children's learning. Staff are extremely skilled in their implementation of engaging and motivating children's curiosity and enthusiasm through play. Children explore their surroundings and make choices in their play very well. This is because the staff provide a broad and balanced range of activities, resources and play equipment which are organised effectively to enable children to freely select and initiate their own activities. Staff are very effective in their questioning, skilfully adapt and extend activities to meet the individual needs of children.

Children make excellent progress towards the early learning goals in all areas of the curriculum. They are motivated, enthusiastic and confident. They enjoy coming to the setting and have very good relationships with their peers and adults. The topics and themes planned for children is incorporated into each child's learning needs. The topic this week is about 'Jack and the bean stalk'. The six areas of learning are covered extremely well providing all children with the opportunity to enhance their all round development and try new and challenging tasks and activities. Children gather first thing in the morning and sit quietly whilst eagerly awaiting discussion time for the day. Their behaviour is very good. A story is read about 'Jack and the bean stalk'. Children attentively listen and participate in pointing out objects from the pictures in the book and strike up conversations about the characters in the story. Children learn to recognise that print has meaning and extend this further when they write their names on their labels for when they grow their own beans. Excellent opportunities are provided for children to use numbers in every day activities. They measure the different sizes and shapes of beans, what size the giants feet are compared to their own and undertake sequencing in identifying how a bean stalk grows and build castles using boxes.

Children learn how plants grow. They spend time planting beans in cotton wool and water, in see-through bags helping them to identify when the shoots start to appear. This is further extended as they plant beans in compost outside and collect water in watering cans pouring it over the compost and beans. Staff ask questions about what else is needed to help plants grow and children shout 'sun'. Children move around the room and outdoor area with ease and confidence. They stretch their muscles as they pretend to be the giant, taking large steps whilst following footprints around the outdoor area. Children's small muscle skills are challenged. They hold chop sticks and try and pick up a range of different sized beans and place them in containers, some with great success. The imagination skills of children is wonderful and confidently expressed. They dress up in large clothing acting out being the giant. They walk around the room in large shoes and jumpers using a microphone to make their voices louder as they shout, 'fee, fi, fo, fum'. A very good range of malleable materials enhance children's sensory skills. They play with cold baked beans and tip and pour dry beans in a variety of containers. Children are having great fun and learn through play because of the excellent range of planned activities and resources provided for them.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Excellent opportunities are provided for children to learn about the world they live in. Staff effectively plan play and activities to raise children's awareness to the differences and similarities of people in today's society. This is further extended to introducing children to various religious and cultural festivals. Staff proactively and positively encourage children to engage in first hand experiences which consolidates their learning. For example, for Chinese New Year, parents are invited in to the setting to talk and share information about their life style. Children play with chop sticks and crockery from China, participate in making a dragon, play with a range of rice products and end the week with a Chinese banquet. Children have access to an excellent range of resources that positively promotes the wider world. For example, books that positively portray people from around the world, puzzles that reflect people with disabilities and dressing up for both girls and boys. Children's individual needs are met extremely well. This is because the staff ensure they have a comprehensive range of information about the child in their care from the onset. Children are encouraged to feel part of the setting. They take home dolls with a diary book which parents contribute to and record the events from home. Children are very keen to participate in this activity which brings together the community and families as they share what their home life is all about. Records of the child's events are read out to the rest of the group and discussions held.

Staff actively promote an inclusive environment for children and their families with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. They are extremely positive in their attitude and approach which encourages children and their families to feel at ease, valued and that their feelings are respected. Activities are adapted and provided to ensure children are supported in reaching their best potential. A wealth of excellent links with other agencies provide further support for the child, parents and staff. Records are very detailed ensuring all aspects of the child's needs are identified and met.

Children's behaviour is extremely good. They understand the pre-school rules because they set these up themselves. Children put forward their ideas and staff print off the words and pictures which are displayed in the setting. These rules are referred to children as and when they need reminding of the setting's expectations of behaviour. Children are encouraged to feel safe and secure because the staff give clear, positive and consistent messages to them. Children's self-esteem is very good. They are praised at many opportunities with words such as, 'good girl' and 'well done'. Methods such as stickers are used to reinforce and reward good behaviour. Children are listened to and their thoughts and wishes are taken account of. Therefore, they are respectful of others. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

An excellent range of written information is available and displayed for parents and carers. This enables them to understand how the setting operates and how their child is cared for. Staff have a good understanding of the importance of building on effective working relationships with parents and carers. They are very approachable, friendly and professional and work extremely well with parents and carers to ensure the needs of their children are met.

The partnership with parents and carers of children receiving funding education is outstanding. Children benefit immensely from the positive partnerships staff develop with parents and carers. An excellent range of records of children's achievements and information are attractively presented and shared with parents both in a formal and informal way. Parents and carers' evenings held raise their awareness to the 'Foundation stage curriculum' and how children progress through the stepping stones. Further support is provided because staff display the

information around the setting including play plans, topics and themes for the week such as the letter or number of the week. This supports parents in being actively involved in their children's learning at home because they understand what activities to do and how children learn through play. Consequently, children benefit from learning at home as well as at the setting.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Robust and thorough systems in place for the recruitment and selection of staff ensure children are protected and offered a very high standard of care, learning and play. Staff have been vetted and are safe and suitable to be in contact with children and that they are suitably qualified and experienced in childcare. Children benefit from the highly motivated and committed staff team who enthusiastically enrich their lives at the setting.

Training for each staff member is identified because of the good monitoring of performance systems in place. Staff meetings are held providing opportunities for staff to cascade new information and share best practice. Children's needs are met very well because staff organise time, space and resources effectively. Children initiate their own activities promoting confidence and self-assurance. This is because the staff are confident in their roles and encourage children to take the lead in their play. Clear routines support children to feel secure and familiar with what is expected of them. Children are well-supported. This is because the staff deploy themselves effectively, getting down at the child's level whether sitting at a table or on the floor with them. Good systems are in place to ensure child; adult ratios are maintained during staff absences.

Records, documentation and the operational plan are mostly first class. Staff are knowledgeable on how to maintain records and understand the importance of ensuring they are accurate and easy to read. However, the system for recording fire drills lack detail. This does not effectively support staff when they review the records in identifying any issues in keeping children safe. The very good range of policies and procedures underpins the effective running of the setting and supports staff in maintaining a good service to children and their families. Records are very well organised and stored systematically making them easily accessible. Information is shared with the parents and carers of their child and other agencies on a need to know basis.

Leadership and management is outstanding. The manager and committee work extremely hard and have a very clear vision for the pre-school and the education it provides. The manager is very effective in the planning of the organisation including staff appraisals, training and discusses this with the committee. The manager has very secure and sound knowledge of the 'Curriculum guidance and is an excellent role model to other staff. The setting embraces support and ideas from outside agencies which they clearly acknowledge raises the profile and standard of care, learning and play for children at the setting. Regular team minutes that are minuted support staff and the manager in identifying the learning needs of children and where best practice can be shared. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last care inspection it was recommended that the setting improve the system for obtaining parents and carers written consent for the seeking of emergency medical advice and treatment. Good improvement has been made and all consents have been obtained. There is a good system

in place to ensure that consents are obtained from the onset and records are reviewed and amended if there are any changes to the child's circumstances. Therefore, children's immediate health and medical needs are met sufficiently should they require any urgent medical treatment or advice.

At the last Nursery Education inspection two points for consideration were raised. It was suggested that the setting improve opportunities in the programme for knowledge and understanding of the world for children to talk about families and people who are familiar to them, and to increase opportunities for physical development for children to learn more about health. Good improvement has been made. Effective planning ensures that children have significantly increased opportunities to learn and talk about the world and the people in it. For example, staff draw children's attention to the weather and large amounts of rain the country has recently experienced and how families are effected by the impact of the floods. Children experience good opportunities to learn about health through physical activities. They spend time outside exploring how their bodies move, how they control their muscles and participate in topics about being healthy.

### **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.

## **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 good. 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**

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

- continue to improve children's independence skills through daily tasks and activities
- improve further the methods used to record fire drills.

#### **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)