

Little Acorns Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	122751
Inspection date	02 October 2007
Inspector	Rebecca Hurst
Setting Address	The Village Hall, Ship Hill, Tatsfield, Westerham, Kent, TN16 2NL
Telephone number	01959 540775
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Registered person	Little Acorns Pre-School
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	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.

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 good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Little Acorns Pre-School has been established in Tatsfield, since the 1960s.

The group operates from the village hall in the centre of Tatsfield. Children have access to a large hall and an adjoining entrance area which is used for story sessions and quieter activities. An outside area is used for outdoor play all year round, weather permitting. Toilets are easily accessible to children. The group primarily serves the village of Tatsfield, although some children attend from the surrounding towns.

There are currently 41 children, aged from two to four years, on roll. This includes 24 funded three and four year olds. The group is experienced in supporting children with special educational needs.

The group opens, from Monday to Friday, during term time only. Sessions are from 09:15 to 12:15. Afternoon sessions Tuesday and Thursday 12.30-14.30

A team of eight staff work with the children. Majority of staff hold a recognised child care qualifications. Additional training is encouraged for all staff. All staff have first aid certificates.

The group is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance and receives regular support from an Early Learning Assistant from the Surrey Early Years and Childcare Service.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children have access to physical activities both inside and outside the setting. Staff ensure the children are able to experience a varied range of activities inside the setting. These range from see saws, basket ball, climbing frame, balance beams to hopscotch. Children are well nourished as staff provide healthy and nutritious snacks whilst they attend the setting. Children have access to fresh water throughout the session, and are able to gain independence of choice at snack time with choices of milk and water. Staff are aware of children with allergies and ensure they are catered for during snack and cooking activities.

All accident and incident forms are filled in and signed which ensures all parents are kept informed and protects the children from harm. Staff ensure all tables are cleaned with disinfectant at snack time which protects children from cross infection. Children are further protected as they wash their hands before having food and after they have been to the toilet.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are protected from harm and neglect as all staff are fully aware of child protection procedures and how to safeguard children. Children's safety is protected by suitable policies and regular risk assessments. Risk assessments are undertaken daily and each outing is risk assessed before it is arranged. Staff also carry out termly risk assessments to comply with the settings insurance. Children are protected in a welcoming environment and they enter happily and move around the setting with confidence. Children play with a range of toys and resources. These are suitable and are well maintained.

The hall is inspected each session before children arrive and equipment is checked as it is set out. Covers are placed in all unused electrical sockets. Security arrangements are effective as there is a door bell entry system into the building, which only staff open. Parents have access to a communication book where they can inform the staff of a change of person collecting their child from the setting. Appropriate procedures are in place to protect children in the case of a fire. Evacuation drills are practised regularly. Staff with first aid qualifications are present at each session ensuring that children can be treated in case of an accident and appropriate records are maintained.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Activities are attractively set out and children enjoy the freedom and encouragement they receive to explore their environment and to make choices. Staff are skilful at extending children's language as well as their imagination. Children respond very well to their light-hearted banter and laugh happily as they play. They are developing good levels of concentration and enjoy their time in the pre-school as a result of the praise and positive reinforcement from staff. Children's individual care needs are well understood and given high priority. As a result, children are happy, confident and comfortable in the setting.

In addition to supporting children in their freely chosen play, staff also plan a range of activities to link with topic work. Planning reflects the Birth to three matters framework. Children are provided with opportunities to learn about a wide range of subjects such as different shapes, numbers and letters. Children's observations are detailed and shows the progress the children are making in all areas of learning. Staff are fully aware of what they have to do to move the children in their development, however, they do not record the children's next step of development in the children's files. Covering staff are not aware of what they have to do to move these children on their development.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are able to gain control over their bodies by organised music and movement sessions at the end of each session. Children sing along to their favourite songs and move along to the words. Children show great excitement when joining in with the adults and moving around the setting pretending to be different animals. Children have good opportunities to explore various materials such as peat, lentils and pasta, which enhances their investigation skills. Children have daily opportunities for maths. The role play area is set up as a shop with items the children can buy with the price written on them. Children add up the items and ask for money and they count out the notes for their peers and they in turn receive their change. Staff also use mathematical language with the children such as 'smaller than' 'bigger than' and 'how much'. Children are able to gain independence with dressing and undressing with the aid of dressing up clothes.

Children are making good progress as they are taught by staff who have a strong knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum. Good assessment procedures, sensitive and evaluative observations and a wide range of well thought out resources all contribute to a good learning environment in which children enjoy activities that cover all six areas of learning. Staff are skilled in adapting activities for more or less able children. However, these are not recorded on the planning. Covering staff are not aware of what they have to do to move these children on their development.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children have access to a small range of resources which reflect diversity and disability. However, plans are in place to improve these resources, and the setting is awaiting a delivery of new resources. There is a comprehensive policy which outlines the setting's commitment to the promotion of equal opportunities and anti-discriminatory practice. Children are able to learn about different cultures and festivals, as staff plan a wide range of activities around different festivals, such as, Christmas, Chinese New year and Diwali. Children are well behaved in whilst attending the setting as the staff are good role models. Staff consistently praise the children which builds their self esteem. Children are aware of turn taking and sharing as staff are knowledgeable in behaviour management.

Currently the setting does not children on roll that have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. However they have a named Senco who has received training, and is aware of what to look for. There are suitable arrangements in place to support children with a range of additional needs. Therefore spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents and carers is good.

A parents' notice board as well as regular open days contribute to the regular exchange of information between staff and parents and all children benefit from the continuity of care that these practices underpin. Parents have access to a range of well thought out literature about the setting. In addition to providing them with a good range of written information, staff take time to speak to each parent and carer when they drop off and collect their child. Relationships with parents and carers are positive and friendly. Comments from the parents include 'my child is really happy and settled here, I am really pleased with the staff', ' I have looked at other nurseries for my second child, but none could match this one, I am really happy for my daughter to come here'.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are happy within the pre-school where the adequate adult to child ratio ensures they are supported in their care, learning and play. Staff work effectively as a team to provide a positive and stimulating environment where children can develop at their own pace. Activities are appropriately organised with all staff aware of their roles and responsibilities and all children are familiar with daily routines. Staff are aware how to keep children safe from non vetted people, and they are aware of making sure staff without a CRB check are not left alone with the children. Staff ensure all policies and procedures are updated on a regular basis to reflect current changes in legislation. The manager ensures all staff receive regular training which further enhances the staffs knowledge and understanding on child development and the curriculum.

The leadership and management are good.

The setting is led by a responsible, well informed and sensible manager who leads her staff sensitively and with concern for all children in her care. Informative observational records of all children, ensure that children's learning journeys through the stepping stones are accurately recorded. All children are making good progress across the six areas of learning as a result of well planned and stimulating activities. Staff feel they are fully supported by an experienced manager and by the committee who runs the setting.

Over all the setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides care.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the provider was asked to amend the complaints policy to include details of the regulator. The manager has completed this to include the phone number and address for Ofsted. Therefore parents are able to contact Ofsted if they wish to comment on the provision.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 1 April 2004 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):

- ensure next steps are written in the children's observations (also applies to nursery education)

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 plans to include more and less able children

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