

Little Acorns Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	117194
Inspection date	13 November 2007
Inspector	Sara Jane Frost
Setting Address	Langley Community Infant School, Pendeen Crescent, Plymouth, Devon, PL6 6QS
Telephone number	01752 204082
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Registered person	The Trustees of Little Acorns Pre-School
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.

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 opened in 1982 and has been at the present site since 1995. It operates from a purpose-built classroom on the grounds of an infant school, in a residential area approximately five miles from Plymouth city centre. The setting has sole use of the building, which has two playrooms, a kitchen, toilets and a small enclosed outdoor play area. They also have use of the school gym and playground.

A maximum of 20 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open Monday to Friday term time only. Sessions are from 08.50 until 11.20 and 12.30 until 15.00 hours, with the option of children attending lunch club from 11.20 until 12.30. Children attend a variety of sessions. There are currently 28 children from three to four years on roll. Of these, 27 children receive funding for early education.

The pre-school employs five members of staff. All of whom hold an appropriate early years qualification.

The setting receives support from an early years advisory teacher. The pre-school is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance and is presently working towards the Bristol Standard quality assurance scheme.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children have a good understanding of hygiene practices. They clearly, know when to wash their hands. Staff further develop children's hygiene practices by gently reminding children when to go and wipe their noses. By staff adhering to good practices such as wiping down tables with anti bacterial spray before snack time the risk of cross infection is minimised.

All staff have a current paediatric first aid certificate and are active in ensuring their practice is regularly updated. Children are protected as the pre-school has a clear sick child policy and excludes children with contagious illnesses. Staff ensure all parents are made aware of contagious illnesses such as the recent outbreak of chicken pox and measles.

Children have a range of healthy foods at snack time such as brown toast and various types of fresh organic fruit and vegetables. Snack time however is disorganised, children are expected to sit down whilst everyone uses the toilet and washes their hands. They become restless due to having to wait too long. Staff do not sit down with the children, which results in children wandering around, often with food still in their mouths. Food is handed around by the children on plates however the majority of children are expected to eat their snack without using a plate. Children's development of independence is limited as staff pour out the snack time drinks themselves. Fresh drinking water is provided for children to access throughout the day and they regularly, help themselves particularly after physical exercise.

Good use is made of outside facilities; children get the opportunity of fresh air throughout the day. Children have a range of activities from balancing, parachute game and ride on toys which help develop their co ordination skills.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Staff are vigilant regarding children's safety. For example, persons wishing to enter the building cannot do so unless greeted by staff. Delivery staff are kept within the main entrance area and therefore do not have access to any children. Visitors to the pre-school are asked to sign, date, time and record the purpose of the visit in the visitors book. This ensures children are well protected.

The pre-school provides a good range of suitable equipment and resources. Resources are in good condition and well maintained. The setting has developed clear practices to ensure resources are suitable for use. By storing playthings in large plastic containers which are accessible to the children, the staff have developed an environment which allows children a degree of choice and the opportunity to develop their independence

Fire drills are conducted on a regular basis and details of the evacuation process is recorded. Children's safety is further enhanced as the staff follow a rota system which enables them to be familiar with all aspects of the evacuation process.

Children are protected as staff are aware of the setting's policy and procedure around child protection procedures. However, some staff are less confident in processes outside of the setting.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Staff have a good relationship with the children, they show a genuine interest in the children as they sit and chat about home and activities they have done over the weekend. Children clearly enjoy coming to the pre-school as they eagerly enter the room and greet each other. They have developed their own little friendship groups. Children regularly receive praise and encouragement from staff, which develops their self esteem. Children clearly enjoy playing with table top games and show immense delight when the tree split and out popped the bugs, then checking with their friends who jumped first.

Nursery Education

Teaching and learning is good. Staff show a understanding of the Foundation Stage and how children learn. All staff contribute towards the planning and therefore know the learning intention for each activity they are responsible for. There are plenty of visual aids prompting adults to incorporate maths terminology such as altogether, one less, some and fewer during play. Children's observations and assessments are in place and follow the stepping stones. However, these records are not fully completed. For example, not all records show targets identified have been met. Children are well grouped.

Children are able to leave their parents with ease. They enter the pre-school room eager to play. Children clearly know routines well such as tidy up and snack times. They are very confident, inquisitive and eager to show and talk about what they are doing.

Children enjoy reading books, the inviting book area encourages them to access at various times throughout the session. Children play in an environment where everything is labelled, art displays such as the bubble print show children's own labelling. Children are encouraged to develop their writing skills, for example younger children write over words scribed by staff, more able children are encouraged to write their own letters. Children are also given opportunities to name their craft work.

The Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) has introduced 'Blast' a programme which helps develop children's confidence and speech in small groups. The programme cycle lasts for six weeks and encourages parents to take an active part in the process by children taking resources home.

Children are introduced to various forms of maths, all count on rote up to 10, the older children are more confident and eager to demonstrate their counting skills. Opportunities are used by staff to help number recognition. For example, asking the children to park their ride on toys at a specific number on a fence panel. Children are introduced to mathematical language in every day play. For example, looking to see what clothing will fit the dolly and using terminology of too big and too small.

Opportunities are provided to allow children to access various forms of technology such as the computer and torch. Children are developing their skills in moving the mouse around the computer screen. Younger children are helped by staff and older children to click and drag.

Children became engrossed for a long time trying to make items shiny, after finding torches in the role play area.

Children clearly enjoy singing and are beginning to learn their new Christmas repertoire including '10 red crackers for a Christmas tree'.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children learn to respect each other through playing and taking turns. However, consideration for children's privacy was not respected for one child by changing their wet clothes in the main classroom area.

Children learn about their local environment and the wider world through the planned programme. For example, the pre-school arranged visitors such as the police and the school crossing patrol person as part of the topic 'People who help us'. Children have recently celebrated the festival of light, Diwali and are currently preparing to celebrate Christmas. Children learn about helping others by taking part in raising money for Children in Need. All children are welcome. The member of staff with overall responsibility for special educational needs has a clear understanding of the code of practice and ensures all staff are familiar with the processes.

Children's behaviour is good, they are polite, saying please and thank you at appropriate times. Children show genuine care for one another. For example, a child offered to look after a train for his friend whilst he went to write his letter to Santa. Staff regularly praise children both verbally and through use of reward stickers. This helps develop children's self esteem and respect for others. Children's spiritual moral social cultural development is fostered.

Parents report a good working relationship with pre-school. They state how receptive staff are to their child's individual needs. For example, one parent was very happy with the way staff introduced a planned programme to help build on developing her child's confidence, and was pleased how well her child is now progressing.

Partnership with parents is satisfactory. Parents regularly receive information, for example via newsletters. The prospectus, discusses the nursery education programme incorporating the six areas of learning and the role of the key worker. Each term key worker reports are sent home; however, some parents particularly those new to the setting, are unaware of who their child's nominated key worker is. Links are being developed particularly for children who are part of six week blast programme as additional material is sent home for parents and children to build on.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The room is well organised and ready as the children arrive. This helps children settle quickly and become engaged in play.

On the whole the deployment of staff and good adult to child ratio provides good support for the children. Children benefit by being able to receive individual attention for example, the opportunity of sharing a story with a member of staff. All staff are suitably qualified and confident in their roles and responsibilities within the pre-school setting. Children are protected as staff ensure all unvetted persons are not left alone with the children.

The required documentation is in place, however, the current practice of recording accidents does not take into consideration confidentiality. All policies and procedures provided to ensure smooth running of the setting are in place and are in the process of being updated.

Leadership and Management is good. Staff are regularly encouraged to access training to improve their knowledge and practices. For example, they have already attended a briefing session on the Early Years Foundation Stage. Staff appraisals are further used to identify training needs. Staff meetings are held on a regular basis and are used to discuss children's progress and to evaluate plans. They are able to help identify children's specific needs and recognise when they are successful in promoting children's learning. Staff work closely together as a group and good information sharing is achieved. They use the self evaluation forms to identify the setting's strengths and weaknesses, this is revisited and updated every six months.

The provider meets the needs of the range of children for whom they provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the provider was asked to conduct regular risk assessments, ensuring the entrance door complies with fire regulations, record information about children's special dietary requirements and provide secure storage for medication. The entrance door now complies with fire regulations, documentation has been developed to ensure information about specific dietary needs is suitably recorded and storage of any medication is now secure. The provider has made suitable improvements in all areas to ensure children's safety is not compromised.

At the last education inspection the provider was asked to develop the book corner area; provide sufficient challenge for older and more able children and provide opportunities for children to develop mathematical understanding in calculation and problem solving. All these areas have been met. The planned programme shows how older and more able children are challenged. Opportunities are provided through routines which help children problem solve and calculate. Staff have attended various courses to develop their own knowledge and skills, such as, 'working with gifted, able and talented children' and 'mathematical activities for Foundation Stage'. Staff have re arranged the book area; books are well displayed and the carpeted area makes it an enticing and welcoming area, which children freely access.

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):

- further develop snack time, to promote children's social and independent skill
- ensure children's privacy and dignity is respected at all times
- ensure confidentiality is maintained particularly when recording accidents

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):

- further develop the assessment and observation records to ensure consistency and show targets set are met for all children
- continue to develop partnership with parents to ensure they are fully aware of key workers and their child's achievements.

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