

# Little Acorns (Colleton) Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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| <b>Unique Reference Number</b> | 148662  |
| <b>Inspection date</b>         | 21 January 2008   |
| <b>Inspector</b>               | Aileen Ewins  |
| <b>Setting Address</b>         | Colleton CP School, Colleton Drive, Twyford, Reading, Berkshire, RG10 0AX |
| <b>Telephone number</b>        | 01189 321629  |
| <b>E-mail</b>                  |   |
| <b>Registered person</b>       | The Trustees of Little Acorns (Colleton) Pre-school                       |
| <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 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 (Colleton) Pre-School is situated in the grounds of Colleton School on the outskirts of Twyford, a small Berkshire town. The majority of the children currently attending represent the local community and come from Twyford or the surrounding villages.

The pre-school was established approximately 30 years ago and is situated in a purpose built building with its own outside play area. It also makes use of some of the facilities within the school. The pre-school operates on weekdays during school terms and is open from 08:45 until 11:15 and 12:35 until 15:05. Children attend for a variety of sessions. A lunch club operates between 11:15 and 12:35. The pre-school is registered for 26 children at each session and has 52 children on roll. Currently 47 three and four year olds are in receipt of funded nursery education. A total of nine members of staff are employed to work with the children; of whom seven of these hold childcare qualifications. The Pre-School is managed by a committee of pre-school parents and is accredited with the Learning Alliance with an emphasis on learning through play.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

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

The provision is good.

Children develop good routines for health whilst at the pre-school. Children can access the toilets independently and understand to wash their hands after messy play and after using the toilet as well as before eating their snack or lunch. Toilets are cleaned during lunchtimes and children are provided with both liquid soap and dry hands using a hand drier. Young children can use the steps provided to enable them to reach the child sized toilets and wash basins more easily. Children take part in good health sessions such as visits from the dentist and healthy eating week. Children have also grown their own tomatoes.

Thorough routines are in place in regard to accident records and medication. Parents sign to acknowledge these. Staff are about to update their first aid training, although four members of staff are currently qualified in paediatric first aid. First aid resources are stored in the kitchen area. Parents are made aware of the sickness policy; and children suffering with sickness, diarrhoea or a contagious disease stay away for the required time. The pre-school is kept clean and tidy and procedures are in place to clean resources and check on fridge temperatures for example. Tables are cleaned down with antibacterial spray after activities, before and after snack or lunch times.

Children have many opportunities to go outside to play in the large, secured play area. Children also use the school playing fields for rambles and the school hall. Once a week children take part in an exercise session called Write-Dance. Children are aware to put hats, scarves and coats on before going out; and do so independently.

Children take part in open snack time and enjoy healthy and nutritious snacks such as slices of fruit, fruit loaf made at pre-school or oatmeal biscuits. Children are also offered water or milk to drink; however, are not given the opportunity to pour drinks for themselves. Children can access water throughout the day. Children have many opportunities to take part in cooking and tasting food and have discovered many healthy recipes. Children bring lunch from home if staying for the lunchtime session. Parents are reminded to provide healthy and nutritious foods. Children are encouraged to eat sandwiches first and to ensure they have a drink. Staff are aware of individual children's dietary needs and allergies. Information about children with allergies is also displayed in the kitchen.

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

The provision is good.

Children are aware of the routines when arriving for pre-school. Children hang up their coats and bags on named pegs and take their name tag to the self registration board. Visitors sign in and are advised of the evacuation procedure in case of emergency. This emergency evacuation procedure is also displayed around the pre-school. The pre-school is welcoming to parents and children and displays made of children's work along with posters and photographs of the children.

Resources and activities are set up for when children arrive and children can access their toys easily. The pre-school is divided into two main rooms; of which one is the main play/learning environment and the smaller second room for quiet time, story time/circle time and computer work.

Children are kept safe at the pre-school. The door is locked and visitors ring the bell for entry; the garden is secured by perimeter fencing and a gate; and children do not have access to the kitchen. Risk assessment and daily checks are made on the building, outside areas, heating, cleaning and toilets for example. A committee member holds responsibility for health and safety and procedures, which are reviewed yearly.

Staff are aware to safeguard the children in their care and a staff member holds responsibility for child protection issues. Staff are aware to protect themselves also from false allegations. Students and any un-vetted staff are never left alone with children.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Children immensely enjoy their time at the pre-school. Children develop self esteem and confidence through their play which while being child led is supported by staff who are caring and committed in their care. Children are happy and settled. Staff speak calmly and nicely to the children and understand their individual needs well. Children have a vast range of toys, equipment and resources to use and can access these easily. Children enjoy, for instance, the art and craft table with scissors, sticky tape, pens, paper and art materials; a writing table; paint and easels; the home corner with its kitchen, dolls and crib, clock, telephone and cameras; sand play; malleable work play; construction; cars and garages; castles; dolls and dolls houses; and other toys such as construction straws, marbles, Lego and Stickle Bricks for example.

Outside children have a secure area to play in which is designed to incorporate large play equipment such as make believe cars, magnetic draughts/snakes and ladders, small tables and benches, balancing beams, climbing frames, slides, a basket ball net, wheelbarrows, trampolines, tricycles, sit-ons and push alongs. As long as the weather allows children can access the garden area when they choose. At other times children also use the large playing fields belonging to the school for nature rambles and take part in dance/exercise sessions in the school hall. Children have fun and laugh excitedly as they use the large bubble machines outside as they play.

Children are inspired during their sessions at pre-school and take part in a vast range of play and activities. Children happily make fruit loaf which they later taste at snack time; experiment with textures, confidently cut with scissors and thread beads onto necklaces and take part in imaginative role playing games. Children flourish during recall time when all the children sit in small groups, passing a teddy around and recall to each other what they have done and enjoyed that day.

### **Nursery Education.**

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Children delight in taking part in story time with a difference where the story turns into an action rhyme and children stand to flap their 'ears', wave their 'tails' and call out excitedly. Children confidently take part in familiar songs such as Five Little Men In A Flying Saucer and make excellent progress during weekly group phonic sessions. Children are encouraged to mark make and experiment at writing their own name. Children are supplied with a range of materials on the writing table. Children use comprehensive vocabulary.

Children are given extensive opportunities to develop their understanding of mathematical language, shape and number. Experienced staff ask many open questions such as 'how many

girls in today?', 'how many boys?', 'in total how many is that?' and if we add/take away' for example. Many children are confident in numbers to 10 whilst some can count in excess of 20. Sequencing is also used and children learn mathematical language such as smaller, bigger, smallest and tallest for example. A weekly group activity for maths uses opportunities to learn about order and children take part in counting in a number line. Photographs are taken of the activity so that later children can discuss with each other and the staff how they learn to count and take away. Staff adapt the session also so that children are offered opportunities to use specially purchased digital cameras to take photographs of each other and to talk about the caterpillars in the number line and how they eventually turn into a butterfly. Children also have excellent opportunities to use the quiet room for computer work where they design and print out their own pictures and use educational programmes on the computer with limited adult help. Children have been learning about the community and have had visits from Zoo Lab, the dentist and safe road crossing professionals.

Children are creative and enthusiastically take part in art and craft work. Children are making designs of themselves starting with their faces which depict their ethnicity. Children later make foot and hand prints. Children talk about the art work they are taking part in and when drawing circles talk about the colours they are shading and explain that stop on the road sign is coloured red; whilst green means go.

Children are active whilst playing outside in the garden area and also take part in a weekly session called Dance-Write which combines physical play with writing/creative play. Children are confident with one another and form warm relationships. Children are happy to approach staff to ask for help if it is needed. Children learn to listen to one another particularly during recall time and when playing in the home corner make imaginary cakes for their friends and help each other as they try on the range of dressing up clothes available to them. Children also take part in music sessions and happily use finger movements for I'm A Little Teapot and Five Little Snowflakes. Children further develop through learning of rhythm with musical instruments.

Staff are aware of children's starting points, likes and dislikes. Staff work well together and planning is organised around the five outcomes for children within the Foundation Stage. Staff have a strong knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum and combine this with Birth-to-three. Planning is completed by all staff and is overseen by the manager; takes into account children's preferences and is extended to suit all children's abilities. Staff are organised as they observe children both in group activities and as they play independently. Observations are both written and in form of photographs and these along with examples of children's work are regularly updated into the children's development books, later to be shared with parents. Themes and activities are continually evaluated to enable staff to have an indication of children's development and next steps within their learning.

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

The provision is good.

Children are treated as individuals and staff are aware of their individual needs. Children play with resources and each other regardless of their gender. Staff are good role models and children behave well. A behaviour management policy is in place and children have respect for each other, the staff and their environment. Children are praised for good and kind acts and staff use distraction techniques if children do not act appropriately. Children are reminded not to scream or run when inside.

Children are given many opportunities to develop an understanding of positive images of society in that they have celebrated festivals such as Diwali and Eid; had visits from children's parent's who are Turkish and French; had stories and poems read in Welsh and a staff member is also of Chinese origin. Children use the home corner which celebrates France and the writing table which celebrates the Hindu faith. Children are also made aware of figures depicting age, gender and disability within their small world play. The pre-school makes good use of the Early Year's Advisor and three children are currently being assisted who have particular needs.

Parents and staff have strong relationships. A suggestion box is available to parents and three notice boards detail themes and activities, general news and the community, staff details, committee news, parent rotas and other information. Parents are made aware of the role of Ofsted. Parents receive regular newsletters and a parents' book details policies, term dates, staff training, health and safety and website information. Parents have positive comments to make about the staff who care for their children; for example that staff are supportive and give feedback on children's well-being; that staff know the children well; that regular information is given out about general news and the curriculum; and that children are happy to attend.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children develop self esteem and have respect for themselves, staff and each other. Children understand right from wrong and behave well. Children form strong relationships and gain an understanding of the diverse world in which they live.

The quality of the partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. Newsletters are regularly sent to parents from key workers about the curriculum. Parents are therefore aware of how to help their children further whilst at home. The highly detailed letters explain about the six areas of learning and the Birth-to-three framework; for example how Personal Social and Emotional Development is incorporated through planning to teach children about keeping their bodies healthy, crossing the road safely and taking part in celebrations; and how knowledge and understanding of the world is incorporated through similarities and difference, caring for animals and using digital cameras and other Information Communication Technology equipment. Parents are welcome to stay at the pre-school should their child not settle and new parents are offered visits to see the daily routines and discuss the Foundation Stage curriculum with the manager and staff. Parents are further given opportunities to see their children's development records as open afternoons are held on a regular basis.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Children develop well personally and socially during their time at the pre-school. Staff work well together and understand the needs of the children as well as having a solid knowledge of the Foundation Stage. The manager of the pre-school is currently undertaking her Foundation Stage Degree course and passes on her knowledge professionally to other staff members. Staff training is ongoing and staff have personal responsibilities within the provision which aids their development also. The pre-school has strong links with the main feeder school. All documentation is in place as required; for example consent/permission forms are in place for such occurrences such as outings, photos and emergency treatment and/or advice; children's records are stored confidentially and are detailed as legally required; registers detail children's arrival and departure times; visitors are required to sign in/out; documents relating to accident records and the administration of prescribed medicines are in order; and all policies and procedures are in place as required.

The quality of the leadership and management is outstanding. All staff have childcare qualifications or are about to start training; and all staff take part in planning, feedback/evaluation and recording of observations on children. Planning takes place once a term and is followed up with key worker meetings, feedback and observations which are used for weekly planning for the next week and based on children's current interests. The manager is aware of her personal strengths and those of the pre-school, which she sees as having a strong knowledge of child development, good communication skills and being adaptable. Since the last inspection open snack time has been created which the pre-school feel works well for their setting; key issues relating to risk assessments have been addressed and a committee member has been given responsibilities for health & safety. Future plans for the pre-school include provision for a disabled access. The manager and committee ensure good communication is maintained with staff and parents which is provided through email, newsletters and daily talks between staff/parents. Training is in place for all staff and is ongoing and the pre-school make good use of outside professionals and Early Years advisors; as well as seeking support for children with particular needs.

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

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

At the last inspection the pre-school was set just one recommendation. This was to explore and identify any safety issues within the premises. The pre-school has addressed this issue in that a Health and Safety representative has been elected on the committee. This committee member ensures all risk assessments are in place, updated and acted upon as is necessary. The work is documented as appropriate. This procedure ensures that children are kept safe whilst at their time in pre-school.

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

Since 1 April 2004 there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required Ofsted or the provider to take 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):

- provide children with more opportunities to independently help themselves at snack times.

### **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)