

Little Acorns Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number

EY377796

Inspection date

09/02/2009

Inspector

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Setting address

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Type of setting

Childcare on non-domestic premises

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

The provider must provide a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must provide a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Childcare (Inspection) Regulations 2008 regulations 9 and 10).

The setting also makes provision for children older than the early years age group which is registered on the voluntary and/or compulsory part(s) of the Childcare Register. This report does not include an evaluation of that provision, but a comment about compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Register is included in Annex B.

Description of the setting

Little Acorns Pre-School is privately owned. It opened in 2008 and operates from a purpose-built modular building. Children have access to an enclosed outdoor play area. The pre-school is situated in Bar Hill, Cambridgeshire. Sessions run from 09:00 to 11:30 and from 12.30 to 15.00 during school term times.

The pre-school is registered on the Early Years Register. A maximum of 24 children may attend at any one time. There are currently 57 children aged from two to under five years on roll. The pre-school currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and some who speak English as an additional language. There are seven members of staff, five of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications to at least NVQ level 2. The setting provides funded early education for three and four-year-olds.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the provision is satisfactory. Children make excellent progress in their learning and development. However, there are weaknesses in how the setting promotes and sustains children's welfare. The staff recognise children's individual needs and promote inclusive practice generally well. Self-evaluation within the setting is generally effective and there is a strong capacity to maintain continuous improvement. The staff establish and maintain good relationships with children, parents and other professionals who deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- continue to develop links with parents and other settings providing for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, to further support children's learning and development
- ensure that daily risk assessments effectively identify potential hazards and that action is taken to minimise these in order to keep children safe.

To fully meet the specific requirements of the EYFS, the registered person must:

- keep a written record of medicines given to children (Safeguarding and promoting children's welfare) (also applies to the compulsory part of the Childcare Register)
- ensure that the setting's safeguarding children policy and procedure is up to date and consistently implemented ensuring that any allegations of abuse are referred without delay (Safeguarding and promoting children's welfare) (also applies to the compulsory part of the Childcare Register).

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The leadership and management of the early years provision

The owner and manager strive for high standards and have a commitment to improving outcomes for children. They continually evaluate the effectiveness of the provision and make changes in response to knowledge gained through training, and of the children who attend. However, although this self-evaluation is effective within the learning and development aspects of the setting, weaknesses in the welfare requirements have not been identified. For example, not all of the required documentation is in place, which compromises children's health and safety. Through an 'ideas tree' children are able to share their views about the setting and make suggestions. For example, in response to a child's request they have recently purchased a digital camera which all children now use.

Children are generally well safeguarded at the setting. A high number of staff have attended training in child protection and parents are made aware of the setting's duty to report concerns through a written policy. However, the policy contains some out of date information and staff do not consistently follow it when they have concerns. This consequently compromises their ability to fully safeguard all children.

The staff work collaboratively with parents and other professionals. There is a parents' forum which meet once a term. This is an opportunity for parents to become more involved in how the setting operates and to make suggestions for improvements. For example, at the next meeting they are due to review the setting's health and safety procedures. The setting works well with other professionals to support children who have identified needs. Staff are currently looking at how they can establish links with other settings who also deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage to the children who attend.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Staff plan and use the environment extremely well to support children's learning. They are able to flow freely between the indoor and outdoor areas during all weathers, so that they can develop new skills in an environment that suits their personal learning style. Both areas indoors and out are exceptionally well set out to provide activities that support all areas of learning. Staff carry out regular observations as children play so that they can use them to assess children's progress. Assessment records are regularly shared with parents and used to plan future activities that build on what children already know and can do. For example, staff have observed that some of the boys were not accessing writing materials so they added these to the outdoor toolbox to encourage their mark-making. Children who speak English as an additional language are provided with opportunities to hear their home language in their play and learning. For example, parents have recorded stories in their home language which all children listen to.

Children experience a rich and diverse range of interesting activities that are

enjoyable and which actively foster their skills that contribute to their future economic well-being. They enthusiastically explore ice blocks, enjoying the sensation of the cold on their hands saying 'it's smooth, it feels icy'. Staff encourage children to observe change. For example, when children say 'there's water' they ask 'where has the water come from?' the children reply 'the ice has melted'. Children are keen to access the mark-making table and competently use paper and pencils. For example, they carry around clipboards and compile appointment lists, attempting to write their name and the names of their friends and staff. This helps them to learn that print carries meaning. Children are highly independent learners and actively pursue their own interests in all areas of the pre-school. For example, in the painting area they freely access drawers of resources, making choices about how they want to use the paint. Some choose rollers, dabbers, toothbrushes and paintbrushes whilst others just use their hands. As a consequence their paintings are unique and individual to each child. They enjoy exploring musical instruments and listening to music, experimenting with sounds and rhythm. They regularly sing and move their bodies according to the actions in the song. For example, children laugh and giggle as they jump up and down to the song 'Bouncing up and down on the big blue tractor'. Children learn about numbers and calculations as they sort and match rubber counters. Staff demonstrate that they are skilfully able to adapt the activities by skilfully pitching their level of questioning to ensure that all children are sufficiently challenged. Children develop new physical skills such as riding 'didicars' where they are required to move the steering wheel from left to right to make it get moving. Additionally they use a superb range of small tools and equipment to acquire new manipulative skills.

Children play in a mostly safe setting. Comprehensive risk assessments have been conducted of the premises, activities and outings to reduce the risk of accidents to the children. However, the daily safety checks do not always effectively identify hazards. For example, on the day of inspection a toilet brush holder which contained a cleaning fluid was accessible to the children. This compromised their safety. Children effectively learn about keeping themselves safe. For example, outdoors children say 'we must not run on the ice because it is slippery and we may fall'. Children's health and hygiene is generally protected and promoted well. A clear sickness policy offers parents information about exclusion periods for children who are unwell and signs in the entrance area alert parents to any illnesses. This helps to ensure that children are not placed at risk of infection and illness. However, the setting does not keep written records of all medicines administered to children, which is a legal requirement.

Annex A: record of inspection judgements

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

Overall effectiveness

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	3
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	3
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	2

Leadership and management

How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	3
How effective is the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement?	3
How well does the setting work in partnership with parents and others?	2
How well are children safeguarded?	3

Quality and standards

How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?	3
How well are children helped to stay safe?	3
How well are children helped to be healthy?	3
How well are children helped to enjoy and achieve?	1
How well are children helped to make a positive contribution?	3
How well are children helped develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	1

Any complaints about the inspection or report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

Annex B: the Childcare Register

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are:

Not Met (with actions)

The registered provider does not meet the requirements of the compulsory and or voluntary part/s of the Childcare Register.

To comply with the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register, the registered person must take the following action/s by the specified date:

- take action as specified in the early years section of the report

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