

Little Acorns Childcare

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number EY294901
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Inspector Sarah Johnson

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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).

Description of the setting

Little Acorns Childcare registered in 2005. It is managed by a voluntary management committee made up of parents of children who attend the setting and members of the Church and local community. It operates from a large hall within the Christian Resource Centre in Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk. The premises is accessed via a ramp to the main entrance and there are accessible toilets available. The setting is open each weekday from 08.30 to 16.30, during school term time. Children attend for combination of sessions. All children share access to an enclosed outdoor play area.

The provision is registered by Ofsted on the Early Years Register. A maximum of 24 children in the early years age range may attend the setting at any one time. There are currently 45 children on roll. Children live in the local area and surrounding villages and some of the children also attend early years sessions at local primary schools. The setting currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and is in receipt of funding for early education for three and four-year-olds.

There are seven members of staff, including the manager, who work directly with the children. All of the staff hold relevant early years qualifications and one member of staff is working towards an additional qualification. An administrator also supports the group on a voluntary basis.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good. Children are very confident and settle with ease in the welcoming and inclusive environment of the setting. They benefit from having their individual needs appropriately met by staff who form positive relationships with all the children and their families. Children are supported to make positive progress as they enjoy a wide range of play opportunities, some of which are in the outdoor environment. Staff are committed to ensuring that all children are fully included and skilfully supported to participate in the activities available. The nursery is led by a motivated manager and strong staff team, who reflect regularly on their practice to identify ongoing areas for improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- create a stimulating outdoor environment which offers a range of planned, purposeful play experiences across all areas of learning and development.

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

- carry out a full risk assessment for each type of outing, and review the assessment before embarking

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on each specific outing (Safeguarding and promoting children's welfare).

The leadership and management of the early years provision

Children feel safe and secure and benefit from very good continuity of care because the staff form effective partnerships with parents. Parents are very well informed about the activities that children are participating in as they access numerous photographs in a scrapbook and receive termly newsletters detailing key themes and events at the setting. In addition, parents feel actively involved as they are invited in to join a charity 'toddle' walk, and are asked to bring in items from home to support children's learning. Parents are beginning to access their children's developmental records on a regular basis, and their comments are valued in their children's 'All About Me' books. Staff support children's transition into full-time school as they invite teachers into the setting to meet the children, and set up lunchtime meetings with practitioners from nearby nurseries and the local children's centre, in order to discuss children's development.

Comprehensive policies and procedures are fully implemented to ensure the sessions run smoothly and children are kept safe. For example, thorough daily risk assessments are carried out, ensuring children's safety in all areas of the premises and whilst accessing the outdoor area. Although the staff are very mindful of children's safety whilst they take part in local outings, the risk assessments for these outings are generally informal and are not fully reviewed before embarking on each specific outing. Staff have a strong understanding of child protection issues and are skilfully supported by the manager, who has clear commitment and ability to implement the setting's safeguarding children policy. As a result, children are effectively safeguarded from harm and neglect, and their welfare is promoted very well. Robust recruitment and vetting procedures ensure that all adults working with or having contact with children are suitable to do so.

Effective self-evaluation systems ensure that the views of parents, staff and children are taken into account. This ensures that the improvements made by the staff have a positive impact on the experiences of all involved in the provision. The key person system has been thoroughly reviewed as a result of discussions at staff meetings, and further priorities for improvement have been identified in the setting's completed Ofsted self-evaluation form. Well qualified and experienced staff respond positively to feedback from advisors at the local authority and are keen to implement new ideas. Supported by management, staff continuously access relevant training courses to compliment their existing childcare qualifications.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Children make very positive progress in their learning and development given their starting points, ages and stages of development. A firmly established key person system ensures that children experience continuity of care and have their

individual learning and development needs effectively met. For example, each child's key person uses the detailed information provided by parents to gain a very good understanding of children's starting points in learning. From here they skilfully carry out observations of the children, collating these together with photographs and samples of children's creative work, to form a learning journey record for each child. These provide a meaningful insight into the children's time at the setting, their achievements and developmental needs. Knowledgeable staff use the learning journeys to determine the next steps in each child's learning and development, ensuring they can continue to promote children's ongoing progress. Individual education plans for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are very well monitored by the setting's trained Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo) and include clear targets to ensure children are supported to realise their full potential. Children are sensitively supported to ensure they are fully included in all activities, and staff are proactive in sourcing specialist equipment and resources to meet children's individual physical needs.

Children settle with ease, as they are welcomed by the warm and friendly staff. They confidently enjoy chatting to the staff about their home lives and joining in with daily conversations about the weather and the days of the week, before delving into the various activities that are provided. The organisation of space allows children to independently choose activities that suit their interests, and children are quick to become meaningfully engaged in activities. Children benefit from daily access to the outdoor area and although the setting has secure plans to develop the outdoor environment, opportunities for children to access purposeful outdoor play are not yet fully maximised. For example, at times, groups of children find that their physical play is restricted as they struggle to find sufficient space on the limited climbing apparatus, and there are few alternative activities or resources provided to promote all six areas of learning in the outdoor environment. Children make very good progress in communication and literacy. Staff encourage them to hear and say the sounds of different letters as they share books together, and children confidently find their own names and those of their peers when self-registering at the beginning of the session. Younger children enjoy exploring discovery trays filled with sand, pasta, bubble wrap and cereals, and older children enjoy discovering the changes that occur when making jelly. The indoor environment is highly welcoming, bright and interesting. This is partly because the children are actively involved in creating displays and resources, such as decorating sandcastles and seaweed for the seaside themed display, and painting large pieces of cardboard to make a shield and drawbridge for their imaginary castle.

Children are developing a good understanding of how to be healthy and keep themselves safe. Through the daily routine, posters and discussions with staff, children become aware of the importance of personal hygiene and regular hand washing. Children's knowledge and understanding of where their food comes from is enhanced through cooking activities and growing their own vegetables. Regular practises of the emergency evacuation procedure help children to learn how to stay safe, and they enjoy informative visits from the fire service and police officers. Children are introduced to a sound range of practices and events which raise their awareness of diversity. For example, they make traditional Chinese lanterns during

Chinese New Year, and wave streamers as they dance along to traditional songs during the May Day celebrations.

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?	2
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	2
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?	2
How effective is the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement?	2
How well does the setting work in partnership with parents and others?	2
How well are children safeguarded?	2

Quality and standards

How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?	2
How well are children helped to stay safe?	2
How well are children helped to be healthy?	2
How well are children helped to enjoy and achieve?	2
How well are children helped to make a positive contribution?	2
How well are children helped develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	2

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