

# Little Acorns (North East) Ltd.

Inspection report for early years provision

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**Unique reference number** EY103722  
**Inspection date** 17/02/2009  
**Inspector** Shirley Peart

**Setting address** 216-218 Park Road, South Moor, Stanley, Co Durham, DH9 7AN  
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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 report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration whichever is the later, which require Ofsted or the provider to take action in Annex C.

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 (North East) Ltd was registered in 2001. The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. It is located in a residential area operating from a two storey building in South Moor, Stanley, County Durham. The group uses five rooms, the two rooms on the first floor are used for pre-school and out of school children and are accessible by stairs, there is no outdoor play area. They are open five days a week all year round. Sessions run between 07.30 until 18.00, part day sessions are also available. An out of school club runs from 07.30 until 09.00 and 15.00 until 18.00 during term times, full days are available in the school holidays. Most children attending live in the local and surrounding areas.

The group cares for a maximum of 99 children aged from birth to under eight years at any session. Children up to the age of 12 years can also attend the out of school sessions. There are 34 children on roll. The group supports children with learning difficulties and disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language.

The group is managed by a limited company and there are three other partner provisions. There are six permanent staff who work with the children. All have a recognised Level 3 qualification in childcare. The setting receives support from advisory teachers and other relevant professionals.

## Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good. Children are very well cared for by staff who have a very good understanding of the needs of young children. They implement most aspects the EYFS framework very well so that children's welfare, learning and development are effectively enhanced. The provision has made very good improvements to recommendations from the last inspection and the capacity for continuous improvement is good. Successful partnership with parents and other professionals ensures that all children, regardless of their ability, receive the best possible chances to fulfil their potential.

## What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- sum up younger children's development and achievements so that any gaps or areas of learning that are not sufficiently covered are clearly identified for each child
- ensure that the complaints log contains details of all relevant concerns.

## **The leadership and management of the early years provision**

The manager continually looks at ways to improve the provision, self-evaluation is on-going and all staff are involved in the process of identifying strengths and weaknesses. Local authority advisors make regular observational visits to help the manager and staff devise action plans so that the outcomes for children are improved. Very good progress has been made regarding the recommendations to the last inspection, which has enhanced the play and learning opportunities for the children, partnerships with parents and children's welfare. Staff make the most of the nursery environment and ensure that this is organised to meet the children's needs. They manage children's behaviour very well in a calm manner and offer lots of positive praise and encouragement so that children learn about how to behave responsibly.

A clear recruitment and selection process is in place, regular supervision and appraisals are held so that staff's self-development is supported very well. They receive regular opportunities to attend training and have all recently updated their knowledge on child protection, which ensures that they understand their responsibilities in this area. Good communication is in place as regular meetings are held. Written policies, procedures and various risk assessments are available. These are currently being up-dated to match the requirements in the EYFS, so that children's welfare is further supported. Good information is displayed in the entrance lobby for parents, which includes contact details for Ofsted and the registration certificate. A complaints log is in place, however this did not contain all details of relevant concerns.

Partnership with parents is good and they are happy with the setting. They receive relevant information on the provision, regular verbal and written feedback on how their children are progressing as well as general daily information such as, 'What I have done today' sheets, which are collated and given to parents during the planned discussion sessions. Good partnerships in the wider context with other professionals such as, speech therapists, special educational needs coordinator (SENCO) and visits to the local school, ensures that the setting supports every child very well.

## **The quality and standards of the early years provision**

Children's health and safety is a high priority. The premises are secure, times of arrival and departure are recorded and child safety gates are placed on every door and stair case. Children wear reflective high visibility jackets for their outings and staff use reins for younger children and talk to them about why they have to hold hands, so that they gain a good awareness of staying safe. Areas within the nursery are clean and cleaning rotas are in place. Although the baby room carpet is marked, this is to be replaced in the near future. On the day of the inspection lunch time did not support the children's independence, social skills and decision making. However, snack times do, as children choose when to have their snack, what they want to eat and make good attempts to cut up their own fruit and help themselves to drinks. Although there is no outdoor play area children are taken out

as often as possible. They go for walks to the local shops, park and woods and these outings are usually planned with an intention, so that children gain the most that they can from the visit, to enhance their knowledge and understanding of the world. For example, they visit the real shoe shop as their role play area is currently set up as a shoe shop. This brings activities to life for children so that they play with a purpose. Staff have also used innovative ways to bring the outdoors in, for example in the two to three-year-old room a 'garden' area is set up complete with soil, plant pots, child size gardening gloves, trowels and camping chair.

Staff have a very good understanding of how to implement the EYFS. They concentrate their planning on what children are interested in and 'Things to care about,' such as significant events in a child's life. This ensures that each child is treated as a unique individual. Staff also know that if activities are based on children's interests then they will learn successfully, therefore they provide activities and experiences that meet the child's needs. For example, in the two to three-year-old room staff noticed that children were not gaining sufficient creative opportunities from the painting activities by using paint pots. Therefore, they now provide different coloured paint on trays so that young children explore and experiment more freely. Staff use lovely observations and photographs of the children to show what they can do and what they have achieved. Although the staff clearly track children's learning and development back to the specific areas of learning within the EYFS, they do not sufficiently sum up the younger children's development and achievements to identify any gaps or areas of learning that are not sufficiently covered for each child. Children with learning difficulties and disabilities are extremely well supported. Staff have high expectations of them but also devise individual learning plans and adapt activities where necessary so that they can successfully achieve their aim. Children work together in small groups and staff work effectively with parents and other professionals to ensure that the individual child's learning and development needs are met.

Young children chat away during their play and daily routines. They sing known songs spontaneously as they are very happy and contented in their surroundings. They talk about significant events such as, what they would need and what they would do to fix the broken light shade, demonstrating through gestures how they would fix it. They show a keen interest in programmable toys as they make good attempts to put the tapes in the tape recorder, turn it on and off independently and make noises through the microphone.

Children listen attentively to favourite stories and finish the endings of the story correctly. Older children demonstrate how they can beat the drum and pretend to read the music notes from the book. Staff extend children's learning as they ask them if they can beat the drum to different tempos, such as fast, slow, loud and quiet. This extends children's creative development and language for thinking very well as they successfully follow instructions. Therefore, children achieve well and thoroughly enjoy what they do.

## 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

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

### Leadership and management

<b>How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?</b>	2
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?	2

### Quality and standards

<b>How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?</b>	2
<b>How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?</b>	2
How well are children helped to stay safe?	2
How well are children helped to be healthy?	3
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

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

## **Annex B: the Childcare Register**

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

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

## **Annex C: complaint/s made to Ofsted**

This section of the report includes details of any complaint/s made to Ofsted when:

- we took action for the provider to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register; or
- we asked the provider to take action in order to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register; or
- the provider had already taken any necessary action to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register.

We will not report on any complaint where the provider met the requirements of the Early Years Register or did not require any action by Ofsted or the registered provider.

### **Detail of the complaint/s**

Since the last inspection Ofsted received a concern regarding environmental health issues and it also emerged that Ofsted were not informed of significant events. A visit was carried out in August 2007; actions were raised and satisfactorily met by the provider. The provider remains qualified for registration.

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.