

# Little Acorns (Herne) Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	127322
<b>Inspection date</b>	26/02/2009
<b>Inspector</b>	Eira Gill
<b>Setting address</b>	Topfield, Rear of 71 Norton Avenue, HERNE BAY, Kent, CT6 7TA
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<b>Email</b>	
<b>Type of setting</b>	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).

## **Description of the setting**

Little Acorns Pre-School opened in 1998 and serves the local and surrounding community. The group operates from a mobile unit on the site of Herne Junior School. It has its own enclosed large garden. It operates five days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 09:00 to 15:30 or children may attend for the morning or afternoon and choose to stay for lunch. The setting has disabled access.

The setting is on the Early Years Register. There are currently 74 children from two years to under five years on roll. Of these, 53 children are from three to five years old. This includes 43 children who are in receipt of nursery education funding. Children attend for a variety of sessions. Currently, the setting supports children who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. There are currently no children who speak English as an additional language.

Nine staff work with the children and one member of staff is employed solely as administration support. Out of the nine staff, seven hold early years qualifications, and two are currently attending training courses. The manager and her deputy are working towards a National Vocational Qualification at level 4 and both have special educational needs qualifications. The setting receives support from the local authority and is expected to be awarded the Kent Quality Mark this year. There are links with both schools on the site.

## **Overall effectiveness of the early years provision**

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding, with very effective partnerships with parents, outside agencies and the two host schools. Excellent systems, particularly for self-evaluation, ensure that the children enjoy a very wide range of exciting and imaginative activities and make first rate progress. The uniqueness of each child is taken into consideration. Children's progress is discussed informally and in short sessions at the end of every day. All staff ensure that the children are very safe and secure at all times. A strong commitment to improvement is very evident.

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

To further improve the high quality early years provision the registered person should consider:

- liaise with other providers delivering the Early Years Foundation Stage to ensure that planned activities complement those offered in other settings

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

Exemplary monitoring and self-evaluation ensure that the manager and her staff are continually finding ways to improve on their previous performance. Points for improvement from the last report have all been resolved. Reflective practice has much improved. Short daily meetings result in sharply focused reviews of activities that were successful, or not so successful, in moving children's learning forward. Completion of the formal self-evaluation form has resulted in a major change of thinking of how to improve aspects of the setting. As a result, capacity to improve has moved on a stage further and is excellent.

Assessment methods have improved a step further. The setting is using a system of assessment that identifies in detail children's levels of performance. Individual planning for children ensures their needs and interests are very well met and staff now ask themselves, 'Why are we doing this?' and 'What do the children think of that area?' for example. Individual assessment folders show detailed comments, including the next steps of learning to be introduced. Parents have also noticed a difference in their children's attitudes and have made positive comments about their children's learning.

The manager and all staff liaise very effectively with parents, who made many positive comments such as, 'he's counting one to 13, he never did that before, he's two-and-a-half' and 'he is talking a lot more, I'm very happy'. One of the grandparents said, 'staff are very thorough and caring and make valiant efforts and are very dedicated.' Staff ensure that childminders, too, are given information about what sort of a day the children have experienced. Good links have been made with the neighbours of the school whose back gardens adjoin the setting. They have put up bird boxes on the trees so that the children can observe different species. Excellent links have been made with the two schools on site, particularly with the infant school where the manager is the governor for special needs. Although the manager does meet leaders of other settings the children attend, little discussion takes place about whether the activities planned are complementary.

Effective procedures are in place for identifying any child at risk, thus ensuring all children are well protected. Risk assessments are carried out regularly to ensure resources and the environment are safe.

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

The setting is an exciting place for children to be. A sensible balance of adult-led and activities chosen by the children quickly develops their confidence and social skills. Progress made and children's choices are noted by their key workers and considered when planning the next phase of learning. Staff also use photography to record children's involvement in a variety of activities.

Children are active learners. A free flow of activities from inside to outside ensures that children have freedom to learn and play in the spacious and very well

equipped learning areas. Children delight in running after the assistants in the garden who pretend to be flying dinosaurs. Wheeled vehicles are in constant use, with children riding in convoy around a circular pathway. Children can watch the birds from an observation platform taking food from feeders. Skilled assistants talk to the children about what they are doing and what they can see. Children's vocabulary and knowledge are developing well. Inside, children have a great variety of activities to choose from. They are guided into using equipment safely and assistants take appropriate opportunities to meet their needs. For example, a child who was fascinated with water and was spending too much time at the sink was persuaded to become involved in a water activity using more appropriate containers. Another was helped to put her pretend meal in the cooker. She said, 'my cake will take 105 minutes!' Children are fascinated watching how the electronic directional learning toy moves when they touch appropriate buttons.

All aspects of the welfare of children are promoted well. Care is taken to ensure that the children develop their independence by deciding when they want their snack and drinks. They know where to find cups and plates and how to help themselves to water and a snack. Assistants hover nearby to ensure the children have the skills to complete these tasks on their own. Children learn to recognise their names quickly when they stick their name card on the pretend tree when they have finished their snack.

Children contribute to the setting very effectively by helping to tidy up different areas each day. They make significant gains in their learning and this is contributing exceptionally well to their future economic well-being.

## 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>	1
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	1

### Leadership and management

<b>How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?</b>	1
How effective is the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement?	1
How well does the setting work in partnership with parents and others?	1
How well are children safeguarded?	1

### Quality and standards

<b>How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?</b>	1
<b>How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?</b>	1
How well are children helped to stay safe?	1
How well are children helped to be healthy?	1
How well are children helped to enjoy and achieve?	1
How well are children helped to make a positive contribution?	1
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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

## **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**

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since the last inspection.

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.