



Little Acorns Childcare Ltd

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY136994
Inspection date	06 October 2005
Inspector	Kathy Ann Leatherbarrow / Susan, Helen Spencer
Setting Address	34 Sheep Hill Lane, Clayton-le-Woods, Chorley, Lancashire, PR6 7JH
Telephone number	01772 696288
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Registered person	Little Acorns Childcare Ltd
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	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.

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 good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Little Acorns Childcare Ltd was registered in April 2002 and operates in purpose built premises close to the M6 motorway in Clayton-le-Woods, Chorley. It is open from 07.45 to 17.45 for 50 weeks of the year. It offers full day care for children aged from birth to five years in the locality and surrounding areas.

At present there are 58 children on roll with 23 receiving nursery education grant. The nursery supports children with English as an additional language and children with

special educational needs.

There is a qualified manager in post, with an established staff team, of which the majority hold an appropriate child care qualification. There are two members of staff working with the funded children, both of whom have a level three qualification in childcare and education, and there is a student on placement.

Lancashire's Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership give the nursery support from teachers and provide training at the nursery.

Since the last inspection there have been some significant changes in staff and management. There is a new manager and a new staff team working with the funded children who now use the first floor of the nursery for their activities.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health is promoted well as they benefit from being cared for in a clean and hygienic environment. They follow good hygiene practices by routinely washing hands before snacks and after using the bathroom. This is actively encouraged and well supervised by staff. The staff follow clear and effective procedures for nappy changing and serving meals, which effectively reduce any risk of cross infection and help to keep children healthy.

All children fully enjoy their meals. They are given a well balanced diet with healthy and nutritious food, prepared fresh daily. Mealtimes are relaxed social occasions in which the children socialise and take pleasure.

They play activities outside on a daily basis which ensures that they receive plenty of fresh air and exercise. There are good procedures for recording information. Most parental consents are in place should children have an accident, become ill or need medication. However, there are minor omissions within the medication record. Staff hold relevant certificates such as first aid and food hygiene, which ensures that children's health and welfare is promoted.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in bright, well maintained setting which staff make attractive and welcoming. They create a stimulating environment by making good use of the available space to display children's work and put out an interesting range of toys and equipment each session. This helps to develop children's sense of belonging and interest in learning. The environment is well organised, helping children to move around safely and independently. The range of toys and equipment are suitable for different ages and abilities, meeting children's needs effectively.

Children are adequately protected as staff have a good knowledge of the signs and symptoms of child abuse. There are effective procedures in place should staff have any concerns. Staff take effective measures to ensure children's safety indoors and outdoors. A daily safety check of the premises is carried out. Staff assess potential risks to children of indoor and outdoor activities and equipment. They produce a detailed risk assessments which helps to ensure that children are kept safe. Children learn to keep themselves safe through discussion with staff, for example, about why they should be careful when plugging in the tape recorder. Children learn to protect themselves in the event of a fire or emergency through regularly practising the emergency evacuation procedure.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The children are very settled, happy and content in the care of the supportive staff team. Relationships between the staff and the children are very good, which contributes to the children's well being. The effective key worker system enables children to receive daily care from familiar adults who know them well. They are aware of and meet the children's needs well, for example they know when the babies are tired or hungry and respond to their signalling. The children clearly enjoy attending the nursery where the staff create a caring and fun atmosphere. Children's progress is recorded and staff are developing confidence in using this information to plan the next steps in children's progress.

Recently the staff working with children under three years have begun to use the Birth to three matters framework, for example planning activities and questions to encourage the children to become 'skilful communicators'. They are planning to introduce more exploratory and sensory opportunities for the babies, such as play with natural objects in a 'treasure basket' and more tactile play with materials such as dough as they have identified that these are areas which could be developed further.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. All staff working specifically in the pre-school have a good knowledge and understanding of the foundation stage and how children learn effectively. However, staff members who occasionally cover in pre-school do not always suitably group and challenge children in all activities. Children participate in a good range of interesting activities, which staff adapt in accordance with each child's individual needs and interests. The children are motivated and making good progress towards the early learning goals. Children's achievement is clearly linked to the stepping stones. The effective observations and assessments mean staff are clear about each child's abilities so they can provide beneficial support and challenge to ensure progress is made.

Children settle well into the nursery and show a sense of belonging as they greet staff and each other. They are involved and interested in activities throughout their day. The children display increasing self confidence and independence, freely selecting equipment for themselves and taking responsibility for their personal care. Children persist at their play for long periods and develop their ideas and thinking as

they take part in good quality planned activities. Their levels of achievement as they progress towards the Early Learning Goals are improving as staff focus more clearly on the stepping stones to achieve steps, such as using the computer and scissors competently. Resources are good overall, however, props for role play, materials for children to design using three dimensional objects and resources to enhance children's climbing skills would further enhance the learning opportunities for the children. Early number skills, colour and shape naming are progressing well. They can confidently follow instructions when running around equipment and following a design when using construction. Children are developing their language and thinking skills through good staff questioning and extension of their ideas. The 3-year-olds can recognise the initial letter of their name as they self register.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's individual care needs are effectively well met because their key workers discuss all issues relating to their care with parents and carers and follow children's own familiar routines. Children are happy and content, developing respect for each other and awareness of diversity. Clear arrangements are in place to care for children with special educational needs. Staff have attended training and work closely with parents and outside agencies to ensure children receive good support.

The children demonstrate a warm caring and kindness towards each other. They behave very well in the nursery, co-operating well at group games, sharing and taking turns. They enjoy the consistent praise and encouragement they receive from staff. The caring environment created in the nursery fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.

Partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. Children clearly benefit from strong relationships between parents and staff. The staff work extremely well with parents, they are actively encouraged to take part in their children's learning. For example, parents have helped staff and management with ideas about a new sensory garden that is due to be built. High quality information on themes, the curriculum and ideas of activities for parents to try at home ensure staff and parents work exceptionally well together. This enhances the children's development in all areas. Parents are kept fully informed about the setting and their child through meticulous and comprehensive information including newsletters, notice boards, detailed daily sheets, policies and excellent communication on arrival and departure.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Staff have secure knowledge of childcare and use this to provide stimulating opportunities for children in all areas. They have access to regular training opportunities and use these to effectively develop their own knowledge and enhance the care of the children. Staff consistently interact well with children and are effectively deployed to give children good support and encouragement, which helps

them feel secure and confident.

Detailed documentation is in place, regularly reviewed and generally implemented by staff, who follow clear and effective routines to ensure that children have a structured day and thoroughly enjoy their time at the nursery. This is shown in planning, policies, working towards an accredited quality assurance scheme and clear staff roles and responsibilities.

The leadership and management of the nursery is good. The manager is a strong leader with lots of enthusiasm and commitment. She effectively motivates staff and is continually looking for interesting ways to develop and improve the nursery and the learning experiences for children. The nursery is meeting the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last Children Act inspection the nursery agreed to; obtain written parental permission to seek emergency medical advice or treatment; consider time for management tasks within the organisational roles; consider providing some domestic style furniture to assist infants in developing mobility and continue normal life experiences; consider providing the children with the opportunity to have a drink with their meal rather than immediately afterwards; review the system for obtaining parental consent to administer medication and review the behaviour management statement to include bullying.

Since the last inspection the nursery has made good progress. Organisational roles include time for management tasks and they have reviewed policies and procedures for obtaining parental permission to seek emergency medical advice or treatment; obtaining parental consent to administer medication and behaviour management. Due to the above actions being taken, they have increased the health and safety precautions to reduce the risks to children.

They have introduced some domestic style furniture to assist infants in developing mobility, continue normal life experiences and provide all children with frequent drinks with their meals. This creates a relaxed and caring atmosphere for children.

At the last nursery education inspection the nursery agreed to; develop staff's knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum and teaching strategies including behaviour management so that children's independent learning and focus activities allow the children to progress; ensure staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities and sufficiently briefed so that they know what is expected of them and the time they spend working with the children is maximised; provide sufficient good quality resources and experiences to promote learning in all areas; develop the assessment process so that it informs the next steps for children's learning and supply parents, formally, with more information about their child's progress; how the nursery activities link to the Foundation Stage curriculum and how they can be further involved in the children's learning.

Since the last inspection the nursery has made very good progress. Some staff have

completed training in the Foundation Stage curriculum, teaching techniques, roles and responsibilities, planning and assessment (which has improved independent learning), focused activities, the assessment of children's progress, planning for the next steps in children learning and the quality of teaching.

The nursery has increased resources and experiences to promote children's learning in all areas. The nursery actively encourages parents to take part in their children's learning providing high quality information on themes, the curriculum and ideas of activities for parents to try at home.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints to report.

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.

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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):

- ensure all administered medication records are signed by parents to acknowledge the entry
- enhance the resources and equipment to enable staff to further develop infants' sensory and physical development in line with Birth to three matters.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- consider further training in the foundation stage for staff members who occasionally work in pre-school to ensure that they are able to suitably group and challenge children in all activities

- provide additional resources to enhance play opportunities and children's learning in particular props for role play, materials for children to design using 3 dimensional objects and resources to enhance children's climbing skills.

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