

# Little Acorns Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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**Unique reference number** 318602  
**Inspection date** 27/04/2010  
**Inspector** Lynne Pope

**Setting address** c/o ASDA Distribution Centre, Staithes Road, Pattison Industrial Estate, District 8, Tyne and Wear, NE38 8NW  
**Telephone number** 0191 5018133  
**Email** enquiries@thedanleisuregroup.co.uk  
**Type of setting** Childcare on non-domestic premises

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Royal Exchange Buildings  
St Ann's Square  
Manchester  
M2 7LA

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

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## 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.

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## **Description of the setting**

Little Acorns Nursery is one of 10 provisions run by a private organisation. It opened in 1998 and operates from purpose built premises at the Asda warehouse site in Washington. The nursery is open Monday to Friday from 7.30am until 6pm for 52 weeks of the year. It is registered on the Early Years register, and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register, for a maximum of 98 children at any one time. There are currently 128 children, from birth to five years, on roll. The nursery employs 21 staff, of these, 19 hold an appropriate early years qualification.

## **The overall effectiveness of the early years provision**

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Staff's thorough knowledge of each child's individual needs, ensures that all aspects of children's welfare and learning are promoted with success. They enjoy a broad range of activities and experiences, which effectively meets their needs and helps them to make good progress in their learning and development. Children are cared for in a very safe and secure environment and all records are in place to meet requirements. The good partnership with parents ensures that staff communicate well to put the children's needs first. The leadership and management have a strong capacity for sustained improvement.

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

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

- develop outdoor resources further, to include natural materials that stimulate and encourage children's interest and curiosity outdoors.

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

Staff have a good understanding of policies and procedures, which are implemented well. In particular, they have a clear understanding of the action to be taken to safeguard children from harm. Effective recruitment procedures ensure that staff have appropriate qualifications to care for children. Their ongoing suitability and training needs are identified through supervisions and appraisals. They have recently attended courses for first aid, safeguarding children and letters and sounds. Child to staff ratios are organised effectively to ensure children's welfare and safety are met. A floating member of staff is employed to cover staff absence, or to relieve staff working in the playrooms, so that they can complete paper work for their key children. Possible hazards for children have been identified through a clearly written record of risks, which is supported by a daily check list for the outdoor area.

Children's artwork is prominently displayed throughout the provision, giving children ownership of the environment. Resources are organised into areas of play in each playroom, such as craft, reading, construction and imaginative play. They are stored at child height which enables children to make their own choices as they develop their independence. Staff constantly check resources to ensure that they remain suitable for children's use. Staff show a good awareness of what they would do if they were concerned about a child's development and state that they would work closely with parents, giving advice about other agencies that can help. The focus of planning is on the individual child, ensuring that their needs are met. Very effective methods are in place for the setting to self-evaluate and implement any changes that are needed. Staff meetings are held every six to eight weeks, where discussions can be held about possible improvements. This helps everyone to have a shared vision and is supported by head office who carries out regular audits against the requirements. One area of current improvement is the redevelopment of the outdoor area. The action and recommendations from the previous inspection have all been met. For example, the premises are secure, and staff have developed their understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage so that it is promoted consistently in the provision. This impacts positively on the care and learning for children.

Good relationships have been developed with parents. Effective procedures ensure that new children settle well into the provision, through accessing settling-in visits which aid a smooth transition from home. Steps have been taken to fully involve parents in their child's development through the observation sheets that are completed by staff. These are offered to parents, so that they can take them home and return them with their own comments about their child's interests. This then helps staff to plan around the children's current interests. Parent evenings are offered twice a year so that parents can come in and discuss their child's development. Their views are sought through questionnaires, and they are kept regularly informed about the provision through newsletters, daily discussions with staff, daily diaries for babies and weekend books for older children. Parents stated how happy they are with the care and learning that their child receives and feel that they are aware of what their child is involved in. There are no children that currently attend another provider of the Early Years Foundation Stage. However, staff demonstrate an understanding of how they would exchange information, regarding the child, through the daily or weekend diary to ensure continuity of care and learning.

## **The quality and standards of the early years provision and outcomes for children**

Children make good progress in their learning and development due to the effective organisation of the provision and knowledge of staff. Staff discuss new children's needs at the initial settling-in visit. They observe the child when they first start, which enables them to plan effectively based on the child's needs. Planning for each child is carried out by their key worker. The written plan is displayed in each playroom with children's interests highlighted, which can be updated during the week. Quick observations are noted during children's activities, and more detailed observations are carried out frequently. These are supported by

photographs and an analysis of what the child has done, with the next step noted, which staff refer to when planning. As part of the self-evaluation at the provision, these planning methods have been devised and introduced recently for children aged over two years. The setting plans to also implement these fully for children under two years. This promotes consistency throughout the provision. The manager meets regularly with the room supervisors so that they can discuss any developments. This helps the management team to be aware of how children are progressing.

Children are welcomed into a calm, warm and friendly environment. This is reflected in them being settled and happy throughout the provision. They show awareness from a very young age of the boundaries and behavioural expectations that have been set. Babies develop confidence as they explore their playroom and the outdoors. Older children show increasing independence as they choose what activities they would like to take part in and carry them out. Children's language is developing really well. Babies make sounds to gain the attention of their carer. Three year olds show increasing confidence as they ask questions and talk about the new computer. Stories are enjoyed by all ages as they sit in a group. Their participation is sought from staff with well-known refrains from popular books, and appropriate questions are asked to ascertain children's understanding. Early mathematical concepts are grasped as children fill and empty containers in the sand and water. Babies attempt to fit wooden jigsaw pieces into the slots. Pre-school children quickly grasp how to work a new computer program as they match pictures that are opposites. Free access is available for older children to the garden. This means they can decide whether to carry out their activities indoors or outdoors. All children have daily access outdoors no matter the weather, so long as they are appropriately dressed. They learn how to manage control of their bodies. Babies pull themselves up against equipment, while older children become skilled at using a scooter. There is a wide variety of resources available. However, the vast majority of resources outdoors are manufactured toys. This limits children from exploring; for example, how water flows down a plastic tube or how to build a wall with builders bricks.

Well-established routines ensure that children adopt healthy lifestyles. They wash their hands before snacks and meals. Staff talk to them about what the food options are for lunch. Pre-school children serve themselves developing their independence. Staff who care for young babies work closely with parents, following the routines that they have at home, such as any feeding practices that they may have adopted. The manager has a good understanding of her role and responsibilities when caring for children with any special educational needs and/or disabilities. Good steps are taken to prevent the spread of infection. Policies and guidance are shared with parents and all necessary records and consents are in place. Children are cared for in a very safe self-contained environment. All visitors have to identify themselves and sign the visitors' record. Children learn how to keep themselves safe through timely reminders from staff. For example, that they should be careful of the knife when the member of staff cuts the food up. Emergency evacuations of the building are carried out regularly to ensure that staff and children are aware of the procedures.

## 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*

### The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

<b>How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?</b>	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	2

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

<b>How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?</b>	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	2
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding	2
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	2
The effectiveness of partnerships	2
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	2

### The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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### Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

<b>Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	2
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	2
The extent to which children feel safe	2
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	2
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	2

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## **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