

# Little Acorns

Inspection report for early years provision

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**Unique reference number**

EY378325

**Inspection date**

08/02/2010

**Inspector**

Patricia Webb

**Setting address**

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**Type of setting**

Childcare on non-domestic premises

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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.

Please see our website for more information about each childcare provider. We publish inspection reports, conditions of registration and details of complaints we receive where we or the provider take action to meet the requirements of registration.

## Description of the setting

Little Acorns is one of the two privately owned settings run by the provider. It opened in 2008 and is located within Corbett C E primary school in Bobbington, Stourbridge. The nursery has use of the large classroom, main school hall and a secure enclosed outdoor play area. The setting is open each week day from 7.45 am to 6.00 pm during school term times only.

The setting is registered on the Early Years Register. A maximum of 16 children may attend the setting at any one time. There are currently 23 children from two years to under five years on roll who attend for a variety of sessions. Older children attend sessions before and after school. Additional sessions are offered during the main school holidays on another site with prior arrangement. This provision is registered by Ofsted on the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register.

The nursery employs seven members of staff, four of whom hold a range of appropriate early years qualifications from Level 2 to degree level. Some staff are working toward gaining and improving their qualifications. The setting receives support from the local authority.

## The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is satisfactory.

Most children are making steady progress in many aspects of their learning and development. Staff are enthusiastic and skilled in encouraging critical thinking skills and enabling children to explore, investigate and enjoy their time in nursery. Partnerships with other providers are developing strongly as staff foster links with other settings in order to promote consistency and ease children's transition into full time school. The partnerships with parents are also developing although strategies to develop this further and involve parents and carers more actively in their children's development and learning are still in their infancy. Some of the legally required documentation to demonstrate how adults' suitability is checked and verified is not maintained on site for inspection.

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

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

- ensure that the records of the information used to assess suitability of staff, students and volunteers include the unique reference numbers of the Criminal Record Bureau disclosures, the date on which they were obtained, and are easily accessible and available for inspection (Suitable people)

10/03/2010

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

- extend the strategies for sharing information with parents regarding children's progress and involving them more actively in their development and learning
- improve the risk assessments to ensure that they are fully effective and cover anything with which a child may come into contact, including some activities the children engage in
- develop the planning of activities and use of resources to extend children's sense of community, increasing their understanding and respect for their own needs, views, cultures and beliefs and those of other people
- review the content and organisation of some whole group activities to ensure they are tailored to meet the needs of the younger children.

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

The manager and the staff have a sound knowledge and understanding of the procedures to be followed with regard to safeguarding children. They periodically update their training in child protection issues including identification of known indicators and following the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) process for recording and reporting such concerns. Staff are diligent in conducting visual risk assessments to identify and minimise hazards to children. However, whilst written risk assessments are maintained, they do not always cover anything with which a child may come into contact. For example, a recent activity involved children handling peanuts as they made bird cakes and although verbal discussion was held with the children, the action taken to minimise potential risks has not been recorded for future use. The registered provider undertakes the main role in the recruitment and selection of staff, informing Ofsted appropriately of changes to the manager's role. The records for demonstrating that the required checks have been carried out to assess suitability of other staff are not maintained on the premises and therefore not available for inspection. This is a breach of legal requirements.

Since the last inspection, some new staff have been appointed and the current manager is working effectively with the staff team to embed significant improvements in the overall operation of the nursery. This results in a collaborative approach being developed as staff are enthusiastic and motivated in their practice and interaction with the children. The recent self evaluation process shows a clear understanding of reflecting upon the practice and considering the impact the practice has on the outcomes for children. The main room is brightly decorated displaying much of the children's own work and offers defined areas for separate activities which children can freely access indoors and outside. Accessibility is made easy for all, with pictorial images on resource boxes, activity areas and to demonstrate routines in order to help all children to develop independence of thought and activity. The activities and resources offered to raise children's awareness of the diversity of society are limited. Staff are seeking to develop this aspect in order to improve their own knowledge about different cultural groups and in presenting positive attitudes to multiculturalism and disability, thereby

increasing children's experiences.

The partnerships with other providers and settings involved in some of the children's Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) experiences are developing steadily. Information is shared to ensure a consistency in the activities and ideas the children follow and in sharing children's achievements and progress. The setting welcomes parents and carers warmly into the main room to settle the children and view the notices, posters and their children's work. Parents speak favourably with regard to the staff being very approachable and the overall progress their children are making, particularly with regard to their social and personal development. They speak with staff on a daily basis but do not always have detailed feedback regarding their child's overall progress or discuss ways in which they can be actively involved in their children's learning and development.

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

Children arrive eagerly into the nursery, settling quickly and easily into the familiar routines. They build very positive relationships with their peers and the adults who know the children well. Staff have a sound knowledge of the EYFS and plan activities to build on individual children's interests and skills. The observation and assessment of children's progress is developing steadily with differentiation for each child noted when considering next steps in their development. The folders detailing each child's progression are not freely available hindering how children and their parents can share their achievements or enable parents to add comments about their child's development. Staff are however, very approachable and parents speak confidently about having daily chats about their children should they wish.

Children benefit from some inspired practitioners who engage the children imaginatively. Open questioning skills are used effectively to promote children's critical thinking as they are encouraged to solve problems for themselves. A member of staff verbally describes the shape of the piece of track required for the wooden railway, encouraging the child to listen, identify and fit the correct piece into the track which he does with pride. Extension and differentiation for individual children is noted in the evaluations of focus activities such as when searching for the various small animals secreted in the tray of potting compost. Children collect, sort and count the items, using size and colour to define the various groups. Older, more able children are then encouraged to not only count, but to start comparing sizes and consider which colour has more or less items. Most children show sustained concentration and behave well, knowing the simple and easily achievable boundaries and expectations. They show care and consideration for each other, calling their friends to join them in activities and seeking out the enthusiastic and familiar adults to play with them. Occasionally, during some of the whole group activities, younger children struggle with maintaining attention and interest, hindering their overall enjoyment.

Some children remind the adults that they have not yet made their bird cakes and enjoy gathering all of the requisites to complete the task. Animated discussion

takes place as they consider the various ingredients such as the peanuts and the cheese, pondering why birds like and eat cheese. Children are active listeners and most initiate conversation with their peers and adults confidently. One older child shares the picture she has created in the play dough, marking shapes with the cutters rather than cutting out. She relates how the horse is enjoying being under the sun and saying that she is going to give the horse wings. 'Then he will be Pegasus' she tells adults.

Children's health and well-being is fostered well as they enjoy regular opportunities to play outside both in the adjacent play area and on the adventure play equipment in the school playground. They balance, clamber with confidence over the log bridge, delighting in their prowess. Their health is promoted as minor accidents are attended to efficiently by staff who hold first aid qualifications. Some staff reassure and settle children when attending to bumps and grazes such as when a member of staff dons the 'special magic gloves' supplied by the 'fairies' so that the child's injury can be cleaned and made better quickly. The child listens, wide-eyed, as the wound is cleaned and then tells her friends about the magic gloves. Children excitedly greet the yoga teacher on her arrival and enjoy participating in the positions and exercises that are intricately woven into a story about clambering into their rockets and flying to the moon.

## 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>	3
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>	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	2
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding	3
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	3

### 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	3
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	3
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
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The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are:	Met
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