

Little Acorns Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspection date 20/04/2010
Inspector Sarah Jane Wignall

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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.

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Description of the setting

Little Acorns Nursery is a committee run group. It has been operational since 1980 and under its current name since 2006. It operates from designated rooms in Camelford Hall. A secure area is used for outdoor play activities. The setting is open on a Monday and Friday from 9.00am until 3.00pm and from 9.00am until 1.00pm on a Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday during term time only. A maximum of 20 children aged from two to under eight years may attend the setting at any one time, of these, not more than 20 may be in the early years age group.

There are currently 22 children attending who are within the Early Years Foundation Stage. They live locally. The provision is registered by Ofsted on the Early Years Register and both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. There are five members of staff, four of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications. The setting receives support from the Local Authority and the Pre-School Learning Alliance.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children thrive in this happy and secure setting. Staff have a very good understanding of children's individual needs and they use this knowledge to plan relevant and meaningful activities that promote their learning and development. Good links with parents and other agencies ensure that children are very well supported. Staff undertake regular risk assessments and daily checks to ensure the environment remains safe and secure. Detailed self-evaluation is undertaken helping the setting identify clear goals for the future.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- provide increased opportunities to share and enjoy a wide range of fiction and non fiction books during everyday play
- improve the safety and organisation of the outdoor play area so that staff can be more effectively deployed to support and extend children as they play and learn.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children are safeguarded by well thought through policies and procedures and the knowledge and understanding of staff. Systems are in place to ensure all adults working with children are suitably checked and vetted and that unchecked adults are not left unsupervised with children. Staff and helpers are clear in their roles

and responsibilities and as a result sessions run well. Comprehensive risk assessments and daily checks are used to ensure the continued safety of both the indoor and outdoor environment. Recently introduced security systems ensure the premises are extremely secure. Staff encourage children to be aware of safety issues and they regularly participate in 'Safety week' where they learn about the support services such as the fire service, police and lifeboats.

Staffing arrangements are well organised with clear roles and responsibilities being assigned. The manager is a strong and committed leader who ensures all operational aspects of the setting are extremely well organised and effective. Staff deployment is well thought through enabling staff to offer children high levels of support and supervision as they play. The current organisation of the outdoor play area requires one member staff to monitor use of the large slide, limiting her ability to engage more widely with children. Staff have correctly identified this and are currently seeking funding to improve this area of play.

The play room is well presented with clearly defined areas of play. Children have lots of opportunity to self select and make choices. Very good use of the outdoors allows children to play freely and explore, for instance, they enthusiastically fill watering cans to water the strawberries and tomatoes that they have planted, or use paintbrushes and water to draw and make marks on the walls and floor. Staff ensure children with additional needs are very well supported and fully participate in all aspects of play.

Regular self-evaluation helps staff to identify areas for development and improvement such as staff training needs, funding applications and changes to the organisation of sessions, for instance, they have introduced a café style snack system which has proved very effective and beneficial to the children. The setting works well with parents and carers and they are kept fully informed about all aspects of the provision and the progress their children are making. Regular meetings are held with key workers to share and discuss development records and newsletters and notices keep them up to date about forthcoming topics and events.

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

Children are happy and settled at the setting. They arrive confidently and quickly settle to play. New children attending for the first time are well supported by staff who sensitively encourage and support them as they explore the unfamiliar environment and learn about the daily routines. Children show a strong sense of security and belonging within the setting. They have established good relationships with both adults and peers. They are learning to share and take turns and staff reward them for being kind to each other by giving a star at circle time. Children participate well at group times enthusiastically joining in with rhyming songs or answering the register. They are confident as they contribute a song of their own and they are rewarded with claps and support from staff.

Sessions are well organised with a good balance between organised activities and

free play. Children confidently choose where to play and staff encourage concentration and perseverance when they visit activity tables. For instance, children who complete a jigsaw or listen well at story time are recognised and rewarded at circle time. Staff undertake regular observations and assessments of all children so that individual needs and abilities are well known. As a result they plan appropriate next steps and ensure their support is appropriate. Planning is used to provide a framework for play and topics are often extended and developed where children are engaged and interested.

Children are learning about healthy lifestyles. They are aware of the care needed when playing in the sun and discuss the need for cream and hats during hot weather. Children benefit from the opportunity to play outdoors for a large part of the session. They thoroughly enjoy the opportunity to engage in structured physical activities and free play. Staff help children develop strength and physical skills as they run, jump and climb outside. They enjoy moving like a lion or big cat as they negotiate obstacles in the play ground. The outdoor area is well resourced and children learn as they play, watching plants grow as they water them, making marks as they use chinks and paintbrushes and learning to take turns as they use the slide and wheeled toys. They are learning to make healthy choices as they help themselves to fresh vegetables and pour themselves a drink at snack time. Staff offer effective support to children as they visit the café for snack or eat their packed lunch. Special diets and allergies are well known and suitably recorded. Staff work closely with parents regarding medical needs and they are kept fully informed of accidents at the setting.

Children enjoy listening to stories both in large and small groups. They take books home to read with parents and staff encourage them to change these regularly. Books are available in the quiet room, which is not freely accessible throughout the session. Children are learning to recognise their name as they self register at snack time. They draw and make marks and they learn to recognise that print has meaning as they see familiar objects labelled within the playrooms. Staff ensure that children with English as an additional language are well supported and some of their home language is displayed to support their learning. Children have a positive attitude to learning. They are interested and engaged and receive high levels of praise and support and as a result they make good progress in their learning and development.

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

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

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	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

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	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	1
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	1
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