



## Little Acorns Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY304771
<b>Inspection date</b>	04 November 2005
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<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	Sessional 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](http://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 re-registered under new ownership in 2005. It operates from the village hall in Eversley, near Hook. The large hall, an annex room and a secure garden are used for play. A maximum of 26 children between 2 and 5 years may attend at any one time. The pre-school is currently open between 09.00 and 11.45 each weekday; they provide a lunch club until 12.50 on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays. The setting is open school term times only.

There are currently 37 children on roll. Of these 27 receive funding for nursery education. Most children live in the local area. The setting supports children with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language.

The setting employs 10 staff. The staff team, including the manager, hold appropriate qualifications including the Diploma in pre-school practice, nursing and teaching certificates.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

Children begin to understand the benefits of a healthy diet in promoting their good health and growth as they enjoy a range of fruit snacks and regular drinks. The relaxed snack time encourages the children to eat as they sit in small social groups with staff. A healthy diet is encouraged through sharing information with parents on the type of food that encourage children's health and development and is suitable to bring in a lunch box.

Children have great fun as they take part in a range of activities which help them develop their physical skills. They develop their abilities to balance, run and use equipment as they play outdoors and undertake simple games in the hall. Children use a variety of toys and equipment that encourage them to develop their finer movements. Adults supervise and provide positive encouragement to the children as they develop their physical skills.

The premises and equipment are cleaned thoroughly, providing the children with a clean and pleasant environment for their play. Staff set good examples to the children, encouraging them to clean their hands and use and dispose of tissues appropriately. Children's well-being is safeguarded because staff have up-to-date information about the children's individual needs and up-to-date first aid knowledge. Children learn about keeping healthy through talking with staff and visitors to the setting. For example, a dental hygienist talked to the children about looking after their teeth.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is good.

Children's welfare is safeguarded by staff that have an awareness and understanding of child protection and of the procedures to take if they are concerned about a child. The manager and staff attend training to ensure good up-to-date practice and knowledge in child protection issues.

Children are cared for in a safe and secure environment where risks of accidental injury both inside the property and during outdoor activity are minimised because staff are vigilant and use thorough risk assessments to reduce potential hazards. However, children's safety is not always sufficiently managed in the hand wash area.

Children learn how to behave safely in the environment as staff give the children clear, consistent guidance. Children remind each other not to run indoors or throw toys as they move independently between the two well-planned rooms. Opportunities to increase the children's safety awareness include a visit from the road safety officer, followed by an outing enabling the children to practice their knowledge.

Good quality toys, and play materials suitable for the children's ages and stages of development

are easily accessed by the children. The toys and activities are monitored by the staff, ensuring their appropriate use and that they are in good condition.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is good.

Children are happy and confident, interested and keen to learn. They enthusiastically participate and concentrate on the activities offered. The staff warmly welcome the children into the familiar environment where activities are attractively set out to stimulate the children's interest. Children learn to follow the simple routine of the day and recognise their role in keeping their environment pleasant as they participate in putting toys and activities away after use. Children's independence is actively encouraged as they make choices about the activities and they move freely between the two rooms. However, the daily plan does not make good use of time, as children frequently sit for long periods of time as a large group.

#### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children persevere and concentrate as they undertake the activities on offer and make choices in their play. They are beginning to take turns, share and co-operate with others in their activities. Children are successfully developing their personal independence as they learn how to put on their own shoes and coats and manage their own personal needs.

Most children speak confidently to each other and to adults. Children have excellent opportunities for developing writing skills. Access to paper and pencils at each activity encourages the children to use writing for different purposes, as they write letters, lists and issue tickets. Children access a good selection of books, although story time is not always a feature of the day. However, children's interest in books is encouraged by the setting offering a library service to each child.

Children are developing an interest in quantity and actively join in the counting and sorting activities. Children have good opportunities to explore numbers, size, shape and position as they play, although not all staff are confident in encouraging the children's interest. Children enthusiastically investigate weight and capacity as they play with sand and water using different sized tools and equipment.

Children's knowledge of the world is broadened through visitors to the setting. For example, the children have met the dental hygienist and the road safety officer. Visits to the local farm develop their knowledge and interest in their local community. The

children have opportunities to experiment with colours as they paint and use different tools to apply the colours. Children use tills and telephones in their play, developing their awareness of technology in their everyday lives. Well-planned outdoor activities encourage children's interest in the weather and the seasons. For example the children eagerly collect leaves for a pretend bonfire; adults draw their attention to the colours and talk to the children about the season.

Children draw on their experiences and imagination as they dress up, undertake activities, write tickets and messages on the notepads and use the till and telephones. Children hear a variety of music in the session as music is used imaginatively to mark the time in the setting. Calm music is played as they arrive and active busy music as they assist with tidying away toys, and staff use musical instruments to get the children's attention. Children have very good opportunities to explore shape, colour and texture as they make choices about the activities they undertake.

Children make progress towards the early learning goals because staff have a strong understanding of the early learning goals and the stepping stones and how young children learn. However, not all staff explain things clearly and make good use of questioning to challenge children and help them move on in their learning. Staff make regular observations of the children's abilities against the stepping stones and use this information effectively in planning activities which will encourage the children's development.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is good.

All children are warmly welcomed and are encouraged to play a part in the pre-school activities. Staff value their individuality, allowing them to make choices in their play and learning. Children develop respect for themselves and others as they use resources reflecting positive images of society. They take part in activities relating to cultural festivities including Chinese New Year and Christmas. However, staff are not confident in this area of the curriculum.

Special educational needs are given good consideration and services are in place to ensure that children's individual special needs are met within the setting and with support of appropriate professionals. Staff are good role models to the children, consequently the children are well-behaved and polite. They learn what is expected of them as they respond to the clear guidelines and regular praise from staff who manage behaviour positively and consistently. Children are encouraged to take pride and pleasure in their surroundings as they undertake their play. This fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents and children complete an informative booklet when the children join the setting, enabling the staff to build on what the children already know. A notice board and newsletters inform parents of the activities children are undertaking. Parents speak very positively about the service offered; however, they receive little information on how to build upon their children's learning. They speak informally with staff and are informed of the child's progress

through a key worker meeting.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Children's care and learning is promoted very well by the clear leadership and management and the systems in place for the organisation of the pre-school. The staff team have a clear vision of how to provide a safe and stimulating environment for the children where they can learn through their play. Suitable systems are in place for recruitment, induction and staff appraisal, which ensure that staff are clear about their roles and that policies and procedures are appropriately applied.

Children's care and welfare is safeguarded by well-maintained documentation. Children benefit from the effective organisation of space and deployment of staff that support them well in their play and learning. Staff work well together as a strong team to ensure the sessions run smoothly. Their knowledge and skills are developing through an ongoing commitment to training.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the registration visit, attention was drawn to the safety of the glass doors and a number of minor additions were required to the policies, these have all now been amended to provide clearer information to staff and parents. The glass doors have now been covered with safety film and a door bell has been fitted, both enhancing safety on the premises.

## **Complaints since the last inspection**

There are 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.

## **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 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):

- provide more opportunities for the children to work and play in smaller groups, for example at snack time, and rest time enabling the children to receive more individual attention
- ensure children are supervised when using the hand washing area for safety reasons

### **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):

- develop some staffs confidence and ability to communicate more effectively with children
- ensure diversity is recognised and opportunities to develop children's understanding and knowledge are utilised
- provide parents and carers with more information about what the children are learning to enable them to consolidate the children's learning at home.

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