

Little Acorns Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	316842
Inspection date	18/06/2010
Inspector	Susan Elaine Heap

Setting address	Bethesda Church, Parkhills Road, Bury, BL9 9AU
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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*.

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Description of the setting

Little Acorns Pre-School was registered in September 2000. It is run by the trustees of Bethesda Pentecostal Church. The pre-school has sole use of two first floor rooms as well as occasional use of the main hall within the Bethesda Pentecostal Church which is part of Parkhills Community Centre, Bury. Secure outdoor play space has been made available in the car park to the front of the building. The pre-school is open each weekday from 9.15am to 1.15pm term time only.

The pre-school is registered on the Early Years Register. A maximum of 34 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. There are currently 27 children aged between the ages of two years and five years on roll and provides funded early education for three and four-year-olds. The pre-school currently supports children with English as an additional language.

There are six members of staff, all of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications to at least National Vocational Qualification level 2 or above. The manager has a Postgraduate Certificate in Professional Studies with Early Years specialism.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

Children make excellent progress in relation to their starting points and capabilities because the whole staff team provide exemplary care and skilfully plan activities to meet their individual needs and interests. A highly effective key worker system, high staff ratio and managers' commitment to ongoing staff training are key strengths of the setting. These combine to provide each child with an inclusive service where they are respected, valued and their well-being is paramount. As a result, children thrive in the warm, caring, vibrant child-centred environment. All aspects of partnership working are effective which ensures consistency in the care provided. Most aspects of documentation are of an exceptional standard. Systems for the management and staff team to effectively evaluate their practice, successfully identify any areas for further improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the high quality early years provision the registered person should consider:

- consider implementing a policy which facilitates the effective use of mobile phones and digital cameras with particular reference to the guidance issued by the Department for Children, School and Families (January 2010).

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children are fully safeguarded and protected from harm through the settings robust procedures and practices. These are reviewed annually, though currently there is no written policy for staff on the use of mobile phones and digital cameras. Comprehensively detailed risk assessments of the premises, and also for outings, ensure that safety is continually monitored and reviewed. All the staff team have attended safeguarding, first aid and fire marshal training, which ensures that they have an excellent understanding of their responsibilities regarding children's safety, welfare and the Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures.

This setting is effectively led and managed by an enthusiastic, conscientious manager who fully supports her staff team, through mentoring and working alongside them. The whole staff team show exceptional commitment to staff training and development through attendance on training courses, which they evaluate and successfully put into practice. As a result, staff take exceptional pride in the service they offer and enthusiastically interact with each child in their care, thoroughly supporting their welfare and learning and development needs. A recent success has been the implementation of communication friendly spaces, to encourage children's language development. Through being highly reflective, practitioners plans for the future are well targeted to bring about further improvement to the provision and outcomes for the children, such as the development of an allotment for children to grow fruit and vegetables. All recommendations made at the last inspection have been successfully completed and have had a positive impact on the outcomes for the children, such as improving children's safety, and planning for their future learning needs. Experiences provided are securely based upon children's individual interests and abilities, which means that each child is fully included. For example, they successfully link children's interest in music and drums to interesting activities, which challenge them and are topical, such as staging their own talent show. Photographic evidence shows them proudly displaying their drumming or break-dancing skills.

Excellent systems are in place to inform parents about their child's developmental progress and achievements. For example, ongoing daily discussions, parents mornings, a termly newsletter which outlines the topics they will be covering, and an annual progress report on each child's learning and development. The managers actively invite the views of parents through daily communication books and a nominated parent representative occasionally attends the weekly planning meetings. Comments demonstrate that parents have formed extremely positive views of the setting and welcome the warm, caring nurturing environment. Systems for involving parents in children's learning and working in partnership with carers at other settings which children attend, are effective and ensure that a fully inclusive service is offered.

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

Children have excellent opportunities to enjoy a wide range of activities which help to promote their health and well-being and develop their understanding of the importance of a healthy lifestyle. They enthusiastically join in planned activities, such as music and dance, moving their bodies rhythmically up and down while tapping sticks together. All children benefit from access to the outdoor environment and enjoy fresh air on a daily basis. Staff skilfully use children's experiences to develop their understanding of good self-help skills, and the importance of good hygiene as they help to clean out the guinea pig's cage. Children become confident and self-assured as they persevere at acquiring everyday skills, such as helping to prepare fruit at snack time or handing out paper towels as they wash their hands. They play a positive role in the daily running of the setting and are effectively helped to make choices and decisions. For example, during snack time they talk about what they have eaten today and the benefits of healthy eating on their bodies. They talk about what they would like to eat the following day from the list of choices available. These are displayed for all to see for the following day.

The premises are safe and secure in a setting where staff place great emphasis on children's safety. Staff effectively monitor and check the toys, resources and equipment to ensure they remain safe and suitable for children's use, through the daily risk assessments, and all children wear high visibility vests on their outings in the community. Through daily discussions or planned visits from the fire service children are actively involved in learning how to keep themselves safe in various situations, such as the importance of not playing with matches.

Children thoroughly enjoy their time at the setting and significantly benefit from the enthusiasm of the staff team and their interactions. Resources are plentiful, of excellent quality and easily accessible from low level storage units, they enrich children's play and learning experiences. The key worker system, and back up system whereby each child has a second key worker who covers for sickness or annual leave, is highly effective. This means that, together with the staff's professional knowledge of child development, each child's unique needs are successfully recognised and ensures they feel valued and secure. Comprehensive photographic and observational records demonstrate that children are making excellent progress in all areas of their development. As a result, the next steps in their learning are carefully considered and planned for. They have lots of opportunities to explore and investigate or demonstrate their mark making skills through sensory play, such as exploring oats, sand or water. Children demonstrate high levels of involvement in all areas of learning and successfully develop skills that contribute to their future economic well-being. For example, they design and build complex models using wooden bricks, nuts and bolts.

There is an excellent balance of child initiated and adult led activities. As a result, very good use is made of spontaneous everyday experiences to follow children's questions and interests, which extend their learning. While watching workers paint road markings, they talk about the heat waves they can see and mimic the

movement with their arms. Topical activities are also used effectively. For example, during the current world cup football tournament, they practise their counting, sorting, matching and problem solving skills by using figures of footballers painted in different team colours. The football theme is continued into other areas and they delight in expressing themselves creatively through role play and creative activities. For example, in the malleable area, they make footballs out of play dough, which they throw enthusiastically into the back of the net provided. Children confidently count the rest of the group in, prior to a singing activity, they know how many adults and children are present by using their counting and estimating skills.

The staff work exceptionally well together as a team, and are extremely warm and caring towards the children. They place great emphasis on children's emotional well-being, behaviour and manners. This is actively promoted through the Christian ethos they share at circle time, when they sing songs and thank you prayers, about how special and unique they are. They listen carefully while someone is speaking or wait patiently until it is their turn to do an activity. The use of stickers and certificates, for being the 'Kind King' of the week, are used effectively to develop children's self-esteem and confidence. Visits to the local park, walks in the local community, and taking part in fundraising activities, such as filling shoe boxes with gifts at Christmas or sponsoring a child in another country, help children to learn about the wider world and value each other's similarities and differences.

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?	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	1

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	1
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding	1
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	1
The effectiveness of partnerships	1
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	1

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	1
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	1
The extent to which children feel safe	1
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	1

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