



Office for Standards  
in Education

## NURSERY INSPECTION REPORT

URN EY257929

DfES Number: 596565

### INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date	04/03/2005
Inspector Name	Cheryl Wilson

### SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type	Sessional Day Care
Setting Name	Little Acorns Pre-School
Setting Address	High Oakham Primary School Nottingham Road Mansfield Notts NG18 4SH

### REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name	Little Acorns Pre-School 1047641
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### ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name	Little Acorns Pre-School
Address	High Oakham Primary School Nottingham Road Mansfield Notts NG18 4SH

## ABOUT THE INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public that the nursery education for funded three and four year old children is of an acceptable quality. Inspection of nursery education also identifies strengths and weaknesses so that providers can improve the quality of educational provision and help children to achieve the early learning goals (elgs) by the end of the Foundation Stage. This inspection report must be made available to all parents.

If the setting has been inspected previously, an action plan will have been drawn up to tackle issues identified. This inspection, therefore, must also assess what progress has been made in the implementation of this plan.

### Information about the setting

Little Acorns Pre-School opened in their current premises in 2003. It operates in an annexe building at the rear of High Oakham Primary School, on the outskirts of Mansfield. Children have access to an enclosed outdoor play area. The pre-school serves children from the local and wider community. A maximum of 24 children can attend the setting at any one time. The pre-school is open each weekday during school term-times. Sessions are from 09:15 until 11:45.

There are currently 38 children aged from 2 to under 5 years on roll. This includes 13 funded 3-year-olds and 9 funded 4-year-olds. The pre-school currently supports children with special needs and those who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs 5 part-time staff. Staff hold, or are working towards, recognised childcare qualifications relevant to their post. The setting receives support from the Nottinghamshire Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership and the Inclusion Support Service.

## INSPECTION OF THE NURSERY EDUCATION PROVISION FOR FUNDED THREE AND FOUR YEAR OLDS.

### How effective is the nursery education?

Little Acorns Pre-School provides acceptable nursery education but children's progress towards the early learning goals is limited by some significant weaknesses.

The quality of teaching has significant weaknesses. Staff work well as a team to form good relationships with children. As a result, children demonstrate good behaviour and knowledge of the setting's expectations. Staff plan a range of activities to engage children's interest, but do not systematically identify learning intentions. Staff lack knowledge of the foundation curriculum and appropriate questioning techniques to extend children's learning. The new system for assessing children's learning is more effective and shows children's progression towards the early learning goals. However, children's assessments are not regularly used to inform future planning. Staff work generally well with parents and professional agencies to support children with special needs and those who speak English as an additional language.

The leadership and management has significant weaknesses. Although, staff and the committee meet regularly, discussions do not sufficiently address the strengths and weaknesses of the setting. Systems to monitor and evaluate the education provision are not in place and gaps in the curriculum are only just being identified. The committee and supervisors are beginning to address staff development, and have a clear vision of what they want to do for future development, but this is not prioritised appropriately.

The partnership with parents has significant weaknesses. A well defined key worker system is in place to foster positive relationships with parents; keep them generally informed about their children and give activities to support learning at home, although these are not always appropriate. They have open access to assessment records but these are not systematically shared to enhance parents knowledge of the curriculum and inform them of children's progress.

### What is being done well?

- Staff create a warm and welcoming atmosphere for children and parents. Positive relationships are fostered, and as a result most children feel comfortable and confident to explore the activities. Children adapt well to the structure of the sessions; listen attentively at group times and demonstrate good behaviour throughout.
- Children make good progress in their counting skills and recognition of numbers to ten. Staff confidently use planned activities and resources; group times and spontaneous opportunities to promote these skills further. They help children to consolidate their learning by sending number cards home and asking parents to use them on a regular basis.

- Staff provide a range of construction resources to encourage children's design and making skills. Children confidently explore the kits and make complex models. They work both independently and co-operatively as part of a group to complete a final product they take much pride in.

#### **What needs to be improved?**

- the planning of activities to ensure: clear learning intentions; staff deployment; and systematic opportunities for assessing and recording children's progress are identified and used to inform future planning
- staff's knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum and early learning goals. Their ability to ensure the teaching methods used and the organisation of resources is effective in supporting and extending all children's learning
- the support given by management, to implement systems of monitoring and evaluating the education provision. Ensuring all aspects of learning are equally covered, to determine if the quality of teaching is effective in helping children learn, and to identify and prioritise staff development opportunities
- the quality of information given to parents with regard to increasing their knowledge and understanding of: the Foundation Stage; the curriculum and their children's progress towards the early learning goals; the appropriateness of suggestions and activities given to parents to support children's learning at home.

#### **What has improved since the last inspection?**

Not applicable.

## SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

### PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children settle well and are keen to explore the activities available, both independently and with adult support. They demonstrate good concentration skills at self-chosen activities, persevering to complete a task. Children do not regularly practise and develop their emerging independence skills; for example by collecting and putting on their own coat. Children are able to co-operate well as part of a group; demonstrate good behaviour and develop strong bonds with other children and adults.

### COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement:	Significant Weaknesses
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Children enjoy group stories and listen very well. Occasionally, children use books independently, appropriately and with care. However, opportunities for children to have their reading knowledge extended are limited. Children are supported in their emerging recognition of letters and sounds in group times; but only very able children are extending this knowledge in their play by practising sounding out and writing meaningful words. Children practice their speaking skills well during role-play.

### MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Significant Weaknesses
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Children benefit from regular opportunities to practise counting and recognising numbers to 10. Some more able children go beyond this. However, they rarely have the opportunity to develop their skills in comparing numbers and understanding the meaning of adding and taking away. Insufficient activities are available for children to compare and measure; create patterns and solve mathematical problems. Children explore complex shapes and space well during their independent construction play.

### KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement:	Significant Weaknesses
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Children confidently use everyday technology; such as telephones and tills in their play. However, their knowledge of information technology is limited, due to a lack of resources. Children do not regularly engage in activities to increase their learning about themselves and their community. They have some opportunities to learn about the wider world and other cultures. Children are skilled when using construction kits and build complex models; but more able children are not extended.

<b>PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT</b>	
Judgement:	Significant Weaknesses
Indoors, children move with control and a sense of space and safety, managing to avoid any obstacles in the way. They aim small balls well into a defined target. They co-operate well in group games but tasks are not always matched to the needs of the group. A lack of resources and space hinders their progress in many aspects of their physical development. Younger children are not sufficiently supported in their use of tools. More able children use scissors and pencils with increasing control.	

<b>CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT</b>	
Judgement:	Significant Weaknesses
Children show interest in the sounds musical instruments make but the organisation of the sessions mean that children's knowledge and ideas are not fully explored or extended. They listen to a limited range of taped music. Children experiment with paint and collage materials, but are often over directed. As a result, children are not able to freely express their own ideas. Children demonstrate good imagination in their role-play and play co-operatively as part of a group in the 'Travel Agents'.	

<b>Children's spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is fostered appropriately.</b>
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## OUTCOME OF THE INSPECTION

The provision is acceptable but has some significant areas for improvement. Children's progress towards the early learning goals is limited by some significant weaknesses. The next inspection will take place in one to two years time.

## WHAT THE SETTING NEEDS TO DO NEXT: THE KEY ISSUES

- improve the planning of activities to ensure: clear learning intentions; staff deployment; systematic opportunities for assessing and recording children's progress are identified and used to inform future planning
- increase staff's knowledge and understanding of: the Foundation Stage curriculum and early learning goals; their ability to ensure the teaching methods used and the organisation of resources are effective in supporting and extending all children's learning
- develop the support given by management to implement systems of monitoring and evaluating the education provision. Ensuring all aspects of learning are equally covered, to determine if the quality of teaching is effective in helping children learn, to identify and prioritise staff development opportunities
- improve the quality of information given to parents with regard to: increasing their knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum and their children's progress towards the early learning goals; the appropriateness of suggestions and activities given to parents to support children's learning at home.

*The provider must draw up an action plan within 40 working days of receipt of this report showing how the key issues detailed above will be addressed. The action plan must be made available to all parents and to the Local Authority if required. An evaluation of the action taken will form part of the next inspection of funded nursery education.*