



Office for Standards
in Education

NURSERY INSPECTION REPORT

URN 113582

DfES Number: 518054

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 25/02/2004
Inspector Name Maureen Croxford

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Sessional Day Care
Setting Name Little Acorns Pre-School Alliance
Setting Address Kelsey Hall, Chalk Road
Ifold, Loxwood
Billingshurst
West Sussex
RH14 OTU

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name The Committee of Little Acorns Pre-School Alliance 1042191

ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name Little Acorns Pre-School Alliance
Address Kelsey Hall, Chalk Road
Ifold, Loxwood
Billingshurst
West Sussex
RH14 0UD

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 approximately thirty years ago. It operates from the main hall and a smaller carpeted room in the local village hall, in Ifold, near Horsham, West Sussex. The pre-school serves the local area and the surrounding villages.

There are currently twenty three children from two to five years on roll. This includes eleven funded three-year-olds and six funded four-year-olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions.

The group opens five days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 9.30am until 12.15pm everyday and a lunch club from 12.15 until 1.30pm three days a week.

There are six part time working with the children. Half the staff have early years qualifications to NVQ level 2 or 3. Three staff are currently working towards a recognised early years qualification.

The setting receives support from a mentor from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership.

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

How effective is the nursery education?

The provision for nursery education at Little Acorns is very good. Children make generally good progress in physical development and very good progress in all other areas of learning. Staff have a sound understanding of the Foundation Stage and use their knowledge to enable each child to progress towards the early learning goals. They are qualified, experienced and work extremely well together to create a calm, welcoming child-centred environment where children are motivated and feel secure. The planning of the topics and activities is excellent and while some evaluation takes place, this requires further development.

Children are helpful and supportive to each other and behave very well. The quality of teaching is very good. The staff are skilled in their teaching methods and use everyday routines and experiences to extend children's learning, although it is not always clear how this will be achieved in the daily plans.

Leadership and management of the provision is very good. Staff work extremely well as a team and set excellent examples of good manners. The provider and staff share responsibility for planning and assessment. Professional development is valued and staff are attending further training. The pre-school is currently undertaking a quality assurance programme.

The partnership with parents is very good. Parents are kept well informed about the provision and their children's progress towards the early learning goals. They are made welcome in the nursery and have opportunities to become involved in topics and activities. There are effective systems in place to share information.

What is being done well?

- Staff are extremely good role models. They teach children good manners and social skills and encourage them to practice them in every activities. Everyday activities are extended through good teaching skills, to promote children's learning, self-confidence and independence.
- Spoken language in the provision is excellent. Staff and children initiate conversations with each other. Staff listen to what children say. They help children to extend their vocabulary and explore the meaning and sound of words, through real experiences.
- Children learn to count and use numbers in planned activities, and practice their knowledge in their play. Staff teach children to sort by function, compare shape, size and quantity, and use mathematical language.
- Children show a lively interest in the world around them and remember what they have learned. Staff teach the children the importance of staying healthy, and use methods that children can relate to. Children participate enthusiastically in well planned musical and role play activities.

- The partnership with parents is very good, contributing significantly to children's progress. The pre-school provides excellent information to parents about the curriculum and their children's development.

What needs to be improved?

- the further development of assessment and evaluation to support all children and extend those who are more able.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Generally good progress has been with regard to the key issues from the last inspection. Staff have attended further training and now have a good understanding of how children learn and the Early Learning Goals.

Parents are now given good information on the Early Learning Goals and how a SENCO will work directly with them if their child has any special needs.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children are happy and well motivated. They behave well and understand what is expected of them. They are given good support and guidance by staff who build strong relationships with both children and parents. Children enjoy a wide range of activities, which helps them to build their self-esteem and confidence. They are developing an good awareness of what is right and wrong.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Very Good

Children's communication skills are developing very well. They are encouraged to talk, share ideas and listen. Children enjoy stories and handle books correctly and with respect. They understand how words are organised and some children 'read' to themselves. Children write in purposeful ways through play and learn to recognise and write their names. They receive regular opportunities to sing, joining in enthusiastically and are encouraged to notice sounds of letters, rhymes and poems.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children have a good understanding of number and most are able to count to ten reliably and some beyond. Opportunities are provided for children to sort by function and compare shape, size and quantity. Children are developing an awareness of simple number operations such as adding together and taking away. They are beginning to use mathematical language correctly and developing an awareness of weight and capacity through the use of resources such as sand and water.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Very Good

Children show a lively interest in the world around them and remember what they have learned. A wide range of interesting topics allow children to explore and investigate aspects of the natural and the man made world. Their sense of time and place is promoted as they talk about past and present events. They receive opportunities to find out more about their environment, for example through visits to the local farm. Children receive regular opportunities to use simple technology.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children move confidently around the pre-school. They receive daily opportunities to move safely and freely in the main hall. This enables them to show good awareness of themselves and others. They enjoy using a wide range of large apparatus. They learn about looking after themselves and staying healthy. Opportunities for children to develop their fine motor skills take place as part of the daily sessions. Children are able to handle tools such as pencils and scissors with increasing skill.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children learn about colour, texture, shape and form using a wide variety of media. They enjoy worthwhile activities which explore three-dimensional space when making collages and creating models. They have regular music and dance opportunities and enjoy playing with the musical instruments. Planned role play activities offered are varied and interesting and staff fully participate to encourage the children's imagination.

Children's spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is fostered appropriately.

OUTCOME OF THE INSPECTION

The provision is acceptable and is of high quality. Children are making very good progress towards the early learning goals. The next inspection will take place in three to four years time.

WHAT THE SETTING NEEDS TO DO NEXT

There are no significant weaknesses to report, but considerations should be given to improving the following:

- consider the further development of assessment and evaluation to support all children and extend children who are more able.

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.