



Office for Standards  
in Education

## COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN 117194

DfES Number: 517941

### INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 17/11/2003  
Inspector Name Karyn Yarnold

### SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Sessional Day Care  
Setting Name Little Acorns Pre-School  
Setting Address Pendeen Crescent  
Plymouth  
Devon  
PL6 6QS

### REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name The Committee of Little Acorns Pre-School

### ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name Little Acorns Pre-School  
Address Pendeen Crescent  
Plymouth  
Devon  
PL6 6QS

## ABOUT THE INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality and standard of day care in accordance with the National Standards for Under Eights Day Care and Childminding; and 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 1982 and has been at the present site since 1995. It operates from a purpose-built classroom in the grounds of an infant school in a residential area approximately five miles from Plymouth city centre.

The setting has sole use of the building, which has two playrooms, a kitchen, toilets and a small enclosed outdoor play area. They also have use of the school gym and playground.

There are currently 43 children from 3 to 5 years on roll. This includes 31 funded three-year-olds and 12 funded four-year-olds. Children attend a variety of sessions. Six children have special needs and there are no children who speak English as an additional language currently attending.

The pre-school opens five days a week during school term time, Monday to Friday. Sessions are from 08:50 until 11:20 and 12:30 to 15:00 hours. There is a rising fives' session on a Thursday afternoon.

Eight part-time staff work directly with the children. All staff have early years qualifications to NVQ level 2 or 3. The deputy holds an NVQ3 and an assistant has completed the Diploma in Pre-school Practice. One member of staff is working towards a recognised early years qualification and another member is also employed as a cleaner.

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

The pre-school is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance and is presently working towards the Plymouth Standard quality assurance scheme.

### How good is the Day Care?

Little Acorns Pre-school provides good quality care overall for children aged three to

five years. A warm and welcoming environment is extended to both children and parents. There is a well-established, experienced staff team who are appropriately qualified. High staff ratios ensure that children are well cared for. The organisation of the setting is good and there is a comprehensive range of policies and procedures.

Good relationships with children are fostered and children are happy and settled. Procedures are in place to ensure that children are safe both indoors and outdoors and risk assessments are completed but not with sufficient regularity. Good hygiene practices are followed throughout the setting.

The setting plans and provides an excellent range of interesting and exciting activities for children, with a large focus on creative development. They have a vast range of different toys for children to play with. There is a key worker system and children's progress towards the early learning goals is monitored. Adults interact well with children providing many opportunities to talk and listen to them throughout the session.

There is a good partnership between parents and staff. Parents are provided with sufficient information about the day care, including policies and procedures and regular newsletters. A large notice board provides parents with information on the setting's activities.

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

At the transitional inspection, the provider agreed to make arrangements for staff induction training, to devise a policy on the administration of medication, to obtain written permission from parents for seeking emergency medical treatment or advice and to ensure that the written complaints procedure included the address and telephone number of Ofsted.

New staff and students now go through an induction process that includes health and safety and are given the setting's policies to read. There is now a comprehensive first aid and medication policy, which clearly sets out the procedure for administering medicines.

Children's information forms now include parental permission to seek emergency medical treatment or advice and a comprehensive complaints procedure includes Ofsted's address and telephone number.

#### **What is being done well?**

- Staff plan and execute an extensive range of interesting and exciting activities for the children. They spend a lot of time interacting with the children assisting them to progress their learning.
- There is a high adult to child ratio.
- There are very good hygiene routines and the setting is clean and well maintained.

- Policies and procedures are very comprehensive, clear and concise.

**An aspect of outstanding practice:**

The Pre-school has an excellent range of toys and staff plan a variety of interesting and exciting activities that children have access to.

**What needs to be improved?**

- the registration system to record staff attendance
- the recording of children's dietary requirements
- the regularity of risk assessments to include the procedure for locking the entrance door and the safe storage of medicines.

**Outcome of the inspection**

Good

**CONDITIONS OF REGISTRATION**

*All registered persons must comply with all conditions of registration included on his/her certificate of registration.*

*As a result of this inspection conditions of registration have been imposed / varied / removed and a new certificate of registration will be issued.*

**WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE NEXT?**

**The Registered Person should have regard to the following recommendations by the time of the next inspection**

Std	Recommendation
6	Conduct risk assessments on a more regular basis, ensuring that the security arrangements on the entrance door comply with fire regulations, and provide secure storage for medication.
8	Record information about children's special dietary requirements and food allergies.

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

### How effective is the nursery education?

Little Acorns Pre-school provides a generally good standard of nursery education. Children are making very good progress in personal social and emotional development and generally good progress in communication language and literacy, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development. However, there are significant weaknesses in mathematical development.

The quality of teaching is generally good. Staff plan a variety of interesting activities around the six areas of learning, which are theme based. However, there is insufficient support for children's learning in their mathematical development. The good range of resources are well organised to increase children's independence. However, the open plan arrangement of the book corner means it does not provide a quiet area for children to read. Staff actively support children in their learning but do not always sufficiently extend and challenge children, particularly the older and more able children.

Staff use standard assessments on children to evaluate their progress in each of the six areas of learning. However, the information gathered is not used effectively to inform the planning for the next steps in the children's learning.

The leadership and management of the pre-school is generally good. The supervisor leads a committed staff team who are keen to improve the quality of education offered to children. A new system to monitor and evaluate the provision has been introduced, building on their existing practice.

The partnership with parents is generally good. Parents speak informally to staff about their children and weekly newsletters are placed on the notice board for parents' information. Staff encourage parents to be actively involved in their child's learning by providing a weekly homework task. Progress reports have recently been introduced to inform parents about their child's progress towards the early learning goals.

### What is being done well?

- Staff provide excellent opportunities for children to practice writing skills. There is a wide range of tools and equipment to develop hand-eye co-ordination during structured and free play activities.
- Children are happy, settled and have good relationships with staff, this helps them to be confident and independent learners.
- Children's personal, social and emotional development is excellent. They are motivated, interested in their play and able to work on their own. Behaviour is

very good.

- Staff plan a variety of interesting activities for children covering the six areas of learning.

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

- organisation of the book corner to encourage children to independently select books
- short-term plans to show how activities can be extended to provide sufficient challenge for older and more able children
- opportunities for children to develop mathematical understanding in calculation and problem solving
- evaluation of children's progress to inform planning
- the frequency of activities that develop children's understanding of how sounds and letters are linked.

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

The pre-school has made generally good progress since the last inspection when two points for development were raised. The first point was to ensure children's assessments were dated and included examples of children's work, to show progression. The second point was to ensure that when using worksheets with children, they were appropriate and matched to the needs of all children.

Staff use the local Plymouth assessments that are now dated, ensuring that progression in children's learning is well noted. Some examples of children's work is now attached to children's assessment records to illustrate progress.

Good progress has been made on the use of worksheets. These are now mainly used with children who are rising fives.

## SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

### PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children are confident and interact well with other children and adults. They learn to share and take turns. They are actively involved in their learning and show high levels of concentration, while tackling difficult tasks. They also work well independently. Behaviour is very good.

### COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Generally Good

Children are keen to communicate with staff, who encourage them to listen and respond to stories, and to be confident speakers. However, they are not sufficiently encouraged to notice print, or the sounds of letters and words. Children recognise their names during snack time. They enjoy attempting to write their own names during structured and free play such as artwork, letter writing and 'the post office'. They use a combination of mark making materials.

### MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Significant Weaknesses

Children recognise and use simple shapes and colours during games and constructional activities. They benefit from regular rote counting to beyond 10. However, their understanding of numbers and their ability to calculate and solve simple mathematical problems is not reinforced during routine activities. Children are not sufficiently encouraged to use mathematical language that describes weight, capacity and size during play activities.

### KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Generally Good

Children have access to the outdoor area and school grounds to stimulate their interest in the natural world. They routinely observe the weather and discuss its impact on their behaviour. They locate Plymouth on a map and place a weather symbol on it. Visitors to the setting and links with the school provide children with an insight into the wider world. Children carefully design and make models and are adept at gluing materials together.

### PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children move confidently around the setting and during structured activities outdoors and in the school hall. Outdoors, they use tricycles and cars to manoeuvre backwards and forwards, negotiate small spaces and avoid others. They use a variety of equipment to increase their physical skills including hoops and balls. Children learn to handle pencils, paintbrushes, scissors and cutlery with increasing control.

**CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children enjoy singing songs and using the musical bells. They sensitively respond to music while creatively moving around the hall symbolising snowflakes. Children imaginatively apply shape, colour and textures to create two-dimensional pictures and three-dimensional junk models. They enthusiastically engage in role-play enacting a 'birthday party' and 'the post office'.

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



## **OUTCOME OF THE INSPECTION**

The provision is acceptable and is of good quality overall. Children are making generally 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: THE KEY ISSUES**

- plan activities to provide opportunities for children to develop their calculating and problem solving skills
- develop plans to show how activities can be extended to provide sufficient challenges for older and more able children
- improve the use of the book corner to promote children's understanding of how to independently select books.

*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.*

## **SUMMARY OF NATIONAL STANDARDS**

### **STANDARD 1 - SUITABLE PERSON**

*Adults providing day care, looking after children or having unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so.*

### **STANDARD 2 - ORGANISATION**

*The registered person meets required adult: child ratios, ensures that training and qualifications requirements are met and organises space and resources to meet the children's needs effectively.*

### **STANDARD 3 - CARE, LEARNING AND PLAY**

*The registered person meets children's individual needs and promotes their welfare. They plan and provide activities and play opportunities to develop children's emotional, physical, social and intellectual capabilities.*

### **STANDARD 4 - PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT**

*The premises are safe, secure and suitable for their purpose. They provide adequate space in an appropriate location, are welcoming to children and offer access to the necessary facilities for a range of activities which promote their development.*

### **STANDARD 5 - EQUIPMENT**

*Furniture, equipment and toys are provided which are appropriate for their purpose and help to create an accessible and stimulating environment. They are of suitable design and condition, well maintained and conform to safety standards.*

### **STANDARD 6 - SAFETY**

*The registered person takes positive steps to promote safety within the setting and on outings and ensures proper precautions are taken to prevent accidents.*

### **STANDARD 7 - HEALTH**

*The registered person promotes the good health of children and takes positive steps to prevent the spread of infection and appropriate measures when they are ill.*

### **STANDARD 8 - FOOD AND DRINK**

*Children are provided with regular drinks and food in adequate quantities for their needs. Food and drink is properly prepared, nutritious and complies with dietary and religious requirements.*

### **STANDARD 9 - EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES**

*The registered person and staff actively promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice for all children.*

### **STANDARD 10 - SPECIAL NEEDS (INCLUDING SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES)**

*The registered person is aware that some children may have special needs and is*

*proactive in ensuring that appropriate action can be taken when such a child is identified or admitted to the provision. Steps are taken to promote the welfare and development of the child within the setting in partnership with the parents and other relevant parties.*

#### **STANDARD 11 - BEHAVIOUR**

*Adults caring for children in the provision are able to manage a wide range of children's behaviour in a way which promotes their welfare and development.*

#### **STANDARD 12 - WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS AND CARERS**

*The registered person and staff work in partnership with parents and to meet the needs of the children, both individually and as a group. Information is shared.*

#### **STANDARD 13 - CHILD PROTECTION**

*The registered person complies with local child protection procedures approved by the Area Child Protection Committee and ensures that all adults working and looking after children in the provision are able to put the procedures into practice.*

#### **STANDARD 14 - DOCUMENTATION**

*Records, policies and procedures which are required for the efficient and safe management of the provision, or to promote the welfare, care and learning of children are maintained. Records about individual children are shared with the child's parent.*