

Little Acorns Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number 113582
Inspection date 22/09/2010
Inspector Lisa Cupples

Setting address Kelsey Hall, Chalk Road, Ifold, Loxwood, Billingshurst, West
Sussex, RH14 0UD
Telephone number 01403 752670
Email 01403 752801 (M.Anderson home no.)
Type of setting Childcare on non-domestic premises

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2010

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*.

The provider must provide a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must provide a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Childcare (Inspection) Regulations 2008 regulations 9 and 10).

The setting also makes provision for children older than the early years age group which is registered on the voluntary and/or compulsory part(s) of the Childcare Register. This report does not include an evaluation of that provision, but a comment about compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Register is included in Annex B.

Please see our website for more information about each childcare provider. We publish inspection reports, conditions of registration and details of complaints we receive where we or the provider take action to meet the requirements of registration.

Description of the setting

Little Acorns Pre-School is run by a committee. It first opened approximately 37 years ago and operates from the village hall in Ifold. The pre-school is open each weekday from 9.15am to 12.15pm with an optional lunch club from 12.15pm until 1.30pm and Tuesdays from 12.15pm to 3.15pm, during term times only. All children share access to a secure, enclosed outdoor play area.

The pre-school is registered to provide care for a maximum of 26 children aged under eight years at any one time. There are currently 24 children in the early years age group on roll. Children attend from the local villages and surrounding area. The pre-school is registered on the Early Years Register, and both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register.

The pre-school employs six members of staff. Of these, five hold appropriate early years qualifications to level 3 and one member of staff is working towards a qualification.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

All children are extremely happy and settled during their time at the pre-school because staff take the time to get to know them and their families well. Robust and comprehensive planning, policies and procedures ensure all children's welfare, learning and development are promoted successfully. All children's additional needs are embraced, valued and exceptionally well supported as the staff fully involve parents and other professionals in order to provide a fully inclusive environment. As a result all children are making rapid progress towards the early learning goals in all six areas. The entire staff team work together to drive improvement, continually evaluating and monitoring the effectiveness of all aspects of the setting. All children benefit from the strong relationships, open lines of communication and the wealth of knowledge and experience the well-established and proactive staff team provide.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- further developing the information gathered from parents about the children's starting points to include the six areas of learning.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

All children are safeguarded effectively because the entire staff team have an excellent understanding of child protection procedures and know how to implement them to protect the children in their care. Full written policies and procedures are shared with parents to ensure they are aware of the setting's role and responsibility with regard to safeguarding the children. Robust and rigorous recruitment and vetting procedures ensure that all adults working with the children are suitable to do so. All visitors to the setting are required to identify themselves and sign in and out of the visitors' book to ensure an accurate record of everyone coming into contact with the children is maintained. All children enjoy a safe and secure play and learning environment because vigorous risk assessments are carried out covering the premises, outdoor play areas and outings to ensure the children are safe at all times.

The staff and management committee are committed to providing high quality care and education by striving to continuously improve the setting. This is achieved through continually evaluating, monitoring and reviewing all aspects of the provision. For example, at the last inspection the setting was asked to ensure all policies and procedures were updated to reflect current guidelines. All the policies and procedures have now been updated and as soon as any changes are required they are amended immediately. Systems are also in place to ensure all policies are now reviewed at least annually to ensure they accurately reflect practice within the setting. A comprehensive, working action plan has been developed to identify the setting's strengths and any areas for development and is used to track the steps taken to drive improvement. Staff attend ongoing training to develop their professional skills and improve the overall quality of the setting. As a result, through meticulous planning and organisation, all children enjoy a vast array of innovative and inspiring opportunities, designed to meet their individual needs and reflect the uniqueness of every child. Highly effective procedures are in place to ensure information is shared between parents, other agencies and providers to ensure a consistent approach to each child's care, learning and development is consistently implemented.

All children have access to a wide and varied range of resources, activities and learning opportunities to promote their development in all areas. Children are beginning to learn about and respect other cultures and beliefs through practical activities, such as, food tasting, dressing up, role play, listening to international music, art and craft activities and celebrating cultural festivals. Positive images are displayed around the setting to reflect the diverse society we live in.

All children benefit greatly from the strong relationships that are developed between the pre-school and their parents. Information is shared openly, ensuring all children's individual needs are being met. Parents are fully involved in their children's learning and have access to their children's records at any time. Staff ensure parents are aware of their children's next learning steps so they are able to extend and develop their children's learning at home. Staff gather detailed information from parents and carers about the children's general welfare

requirements and their likes and dislikes before the children begin to attend. However, little information is currently obtained about the children's starting points with regard to the six areas of learning to enable staff to begin to plan for their individual needs as soon as possible. Parents are kept fully up to date with the progress of their children through discussions with their children's key person, access to their records and termly meetings. Notice boards, information displays and workshops are used to ensure all parents have an understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage and how the staff implement strategies to fully meet the requirements and ensure all children continue to make progress. Comprehensive procedures are in place to prepare the children for their transition into school and very good relationships have been developed with local schools and the reception class staff. Teachers visit the setting to build relationships with the children prior to their transfer and children also visit the school they are due to attend to familiarise themselves with the building and the adults they will be spending time with.

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

All staff have an exceptionally good understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Each key person spends time observing the children at play and they all use the information effectively to identify the children's next learning steps. This information is collated and fully incorporated into the daily planning to ensure the children's interests and requirements are being met. Staff take the time to get to know each child extremely well and they are all aware of the planned learning outcomes for the activities provided. As a result, everything the staff say and do with the children has a purpose.

All children are fully engaged throughout the session. They self-select resources and choose activities with ease, developing their independence and decision-making skills effectively. Children participate fully because the staff team are enthusiastic, motivated and interested in the children. This provides a stimulating, exciting and yet calm play and learning environment. Staff are skilled at knowing when to stand back and let the children's own ideas and play develop naturally, and they know when to intervene to encourage more purposeful play or introduce new concepts and vocabulary to challenge the children's learning. Children enjoy exploring and investigating new objects that are introduced in the 'surprise box'. This activity promotes the children's curiosity and stimulates very good discussions as the children's confidence and spoken language develops well. Children practice their emergent writing skills in a wide variety of ways, using a vast selection of resources and mark-making materials. For example, children are encouraged to attempt to write their own names on their art work, they make shapes and letters in the sand and corn flour, they use paint brushes and water outside and use the large scale outdoor chalk board.

Children benefit from the rich learning environment that is full of different text, numbers, shapes, colours and pictures. The book corner has recently been developed to make it more comfortable and inviting for the children. The soft, child-size sofas and well stocked assortment of books encourage the children to

make good use of this area. Children handle the books correctly and often pretend to read to each other, predicting what will happen next and they enjoy listening to stories. Staff bring the stories to life using props and character voices, holding the children's attention as they begin to learn that text has meaning. Children benefit from the wide and varied experience and knowledge of the highly organised and effective staff team. Staff introduce innovative activities and extend the children's learning through incidental opportunities. For example, children show an interest in the large building blocks in the hall and begin to build walls around the home corner. Staff notice the children recognising patterns and extend the activity to cater for the children's enthusiasm. The building blocks are moved outside and children build a high wall, figuring out how to leave holes for windows and doors as they practise and develop their skills. Some children notice that the pulley system outside is preventing them from continuing and discussion follows about how to work around this problem. Staff encourage the children to think about their options and the children decide to move their building to the other side of the garden.

Children use a range of everyday technology, such as tape recorders and torches. Staff find interesting ways to ensure the children are engaged. For example, staff prepared an owl nest, using a wide range of materials, such as, feathers, twigs and wool and covered it over to make it dark. Children used the torches to light up the nest and talked at length about what the owl might have used to make the nest comfortable. The activity developed and children's vocabulary was extended as a result. They read stories and watched the birds outside as they built nests, making the experiences real for the children. Children enjoy their time at the setting and have lots of fun, laughing and giggling with each other and the staff team as they learn new skills without realising it.

All children show high levels of independence throughout the session and are developing exceptionally good self-care skills. For example, children are able to put on and take off their aprons with no assistance and they use a range of tools with control, such as, using knives to prepare their own fruit at snack time and pour their own drinks with ease. Children learn about the importance of healthy eating and lifestyles through discussion, physical play and the provision of fresh fruit at snack time. They talk about how exercise is good for them during outdoor play and musical movement and recognise when their hearts are beating faster. All children learn about how to keep themselves safe during their time at the pre-school. They understand and follow the simple group rules and often remind each other about safety issues. For example, children know they must sit down when they are using the scissors and they pick up resources that fall on the floor so that people will not trip over them. Children also practise regular fire drills with the staff team to ensure they know how to evacuate the building quickly and safely in the event of an emergency. All children behave exceptionally well because staff implement the clear rules and boundaries consistently. As a result, the children know exactly what is expected of them and they respond well to the praise and encouragement of the staff team. The staff take the time to recognise and reward the children's efforts, re-enforcing the positive behaviour as the children begin to learn about right and wrong.

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

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	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

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
--	---

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

Any complaints about the inspection or report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

Annex B: the Childcare Register

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are: Met

The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are: Met