

Little Acorns Nursery at High Halden

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector

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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*.

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 Nursery has been registered since 1993. It occupies its own single-storey premises situated in the grounds of High Halden Primary School in High Halden, Kent and serves children from the local community. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area. It opens five days a week during the school term time. It is open from 8.45am to 3.30pm and children may attend a variety of sessions. A maximum of 29 children from the early years group may attend at any one time. There are currently 19 on roll aged between two and four. Some children receive funding for early education. The nursery currently supports a number of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The nursery employs four members of staff who work directly with the children and all have appropriate Level 3 qualifications in Early Years Education and Development and Childcare. The nursery is registered with Ofsted on the Early Years Register. The manager and staff receive support from the local authority early years team.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Staff are committed, welcoming and successfully engage children in activities that interest them. Relationships between staff and children are positive and as a result children enjoy learning. The setting is constantly assessing the outcomes of its work and extending its resources appropriately to support children's development and as such provides an inclusive setting. The capacity to maintain continuous improvement is strong.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- ensure activities in the outdoor spaces are planned consistently well to support children in developing their skills in all areas of learning

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The nursery is well managed and runs smoothly on a daily basis. Arrangements for safeguarding children are thorough, and the health and safety of children is ensured at all times. Vetting procedures, for new staff, are fully in place and policies and records cover all requirements. Risk assessments and daily attendance registers are rigorously completed.

Staffing ratios are appropriate and the setting deploys its resources well to meet children's needs. For example, through a successful application for funding, the setting has ensured that computing equipment is accessible for use by all children. Staff are well qualified and maintain up-to-date training. Managers' self-evaluation

about the work of the setting is accurate and enables them to identify the right priorities for development. They know that there is a need to increase the use of the outside spaces to provide opportunities to develop children's skills across all areas of learning, plans to improve these are in place.

Equality of opportunity is central to the work of Little Acorns. Staff ensure that all children are fully included. All are known as individuals and make good progress. Overall, teaching is well planned and children are set appropriately challenging tasks. Extra care is given to a few children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Managers work closely with the local primary school that shares the site. For example, the nursery has a dedicated allotment space within the primary school fruit and vegetable garden, and there are well organised arrangements for children to visit the Reception class several times before they start at the primary school. Effective links with outside professionals support children with educational needs and/or disabilities well. They also have a productive relationship with the local authority early years team, and staff have worked successfully with another local setting to share and develop ideas in order to secure improvements.

Managers work hard to engage the support of parents and carers. A good range of information is provided and opportunities to feedback are welcome. For example, recent enhancements have been introduced such as a contact book as a result of consultation of their views, and parents and carers have taken a leading role in establishing the Little Acorns' website.

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

Children enjoy the full range of self-chosen and guided activities that staff carefully plan for them and achieve well. Established routines help them to settle quickly and feel confident. For example, at the start of the afternoon, children happily join in songs and action rhymes and develop their literacy skills by recognising each other's names, which are written on cards. They are at ease selecting activities for themselves. Staff are always close by to intervene sensitively in an attempt to take their learning and understanding forward through targeted discussion and questioning. Central to all observed interventions are good conversations focused on helping children improve their speaking and listening skills.

The learning environment is attractive and well organised. However, opportunities for children to develop their literacy and creative skills are sometimes restricted in the outside areas. Children move freely between the indoor and the outdoor spaces in pursuit of activities taking their interest. They understand the daily routines designed for their safety like the rules about walking in the indoor areas and about wearing warm clothing outside. Topic work further supports good knowledge of keeping themselves safe. For example, they explore a wide range of domestic tools and appliances to learn what makes some of them more dangerous than others.

The social and welfare needs of children are well met. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported by the key person who cares for them. The progress of all children is carefully monitored. Children behave in a very sensible and supportive way towards one another, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. They are enthusiastic to contribute and help tidy up, which they do readily and willingly. They happily share resources with each other and take turns. Meal times are calm and sociable. Children follow simple rules of hygiene, such as washing hands before eating. Healthy choices are encouraged and fruit and raw vegetable snacks are popular. Fitness and physical development are encouraged through using climbing and balancing equipment, tricycles and pedal vehicles outside.

Strong personal and social development and good outcomes in basic skills including computing prepare children well for the next stage in their education.

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?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	2

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	2
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding	2
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	2
The effectiveness of partnerships	2
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	2

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	2
The extent to which children feel safe	2
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	2
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	2

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Annex B: the Childcare Register

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

Met