

Oaklands Little Acorns Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector	John Viner
Setting address	Oaklands Infant School, Weeds Wood Road, Chatham, Kent, ME5 0QS
Telephone number	01634 668187
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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.

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Description of the setting

Little Acorns Pre-School was first opened in 1999 and is run by a committee. It operates from a temporary classroom set in the grounds of Oaklands Infant School in Walderslade on the outskirts of Chatham. There is a large, enclosed outside area and in addition, the pre-school uses some of the school's outdoor facilities. The majority of the children attending live nearby. It is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. A maximum of 20 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. Sessions are from 9am to 12 noon on weekdays during school term times. There are currently 24 children aged from two to under five years on roll. The pre-school receives funding for early education. The pre-school currently supports a number of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The pre-school employs five members of staff. Each holds an appropriate Early Years qualification. The pre-school receives support from an advisory teacher from Medway council.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is satisfactory.

Overall the quality of the provision is satisfactory. Adults know the children well and share a commitment to promoting their welfare and learning. Children are safe, secure and well cared for so that they behave well and play together happily. There are missed opportunities for involving parents and carers in their children's learning. The learning environment is bright and clean, although there are not enough letters, shapes and numbers displayed around the room to support children's early literacy and numeracy skills. The manager provides clear direction, is dismantling barriers to learning and has united her team behind her to drive for improvement. This confirms the pre-school has a satisfactory capacity to improve.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- improve the range of letters, shapes and numbers that are displayed indoors and outdoors to support children's learning and development
- label containers throughout the pre-school so that children experience the real application of words and pictures
- ensure that interactive displays are at a suitable level so that children are encouraged to read and experiment for themselves
- increase the involvement of parents and carers in their children's progress so they can support learning and development more effectively.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The manager has united the staff on a journey of improvement. They understand the strengths and weakness of the pre-school and have taken appropriate action. However, this has yet to make a sustained impact on children's learning and progress. There are good systems for keeping children safe; all staff know what to do if they are concerned about a child's welfare and the manager is appropriately trained to lead on child protection. Thorough checks are made to ensure that staff are suitable people to work with children. Resources are deployed satisfactorily to make the most of the available space.

The pre-school promotes equal opportunities satisfactorily. Adults know the children well and plan for them satisfactorily. They seek the advice of outside agencies when necessary to help them provide additional support. Their observation and assessments are used to identify individuals' next steps in learning. Children's progress is recorded in their Learning Journey, to which parents can contribute. New ways of measuring children's progress against their starting points have been introduced recently but are not yet embedded. So, their effectiveness at measuring the progress of different groups cannot yet be measured. Adults promote diversity well, ensuring that children experience good range of other cultures, festivals and traditions, such as Diwali and Guy Fawkes Night.

Good partnerships with the children's centre and primary school enrich children's learning. Direct support for the funded children is provided by the children's centre manager while the school provides both administrative support and the use of its outdoor facilities to extend opportunities for physical development. Parents and carers speak highly of the pre-school and its impact on their children's welfare and learning. They say how happy their children are and how well their language has developed since joining the pre-school. The pre-school engages with parents satisfactorily through day-to-day contact and through termly questionnaires. This information is used to establish children's starting points. However, many parents and carers are not involved in their children's learning and development, which limits the impact of their partnership with the pre-school.

Self-evaluation is satisfactory. The manager has successfully introduced formal self-evaluation. However, strategic development is currently at an early stage. The manager's strong leadership is having a positive impact on the future plans of the pre-school, which confirms the satisfactory capacity for sustained improvement.

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

Most children make satisfactory progress overall from their starting points. This is especially true for their social and physical development and, for some children, in their growing confidence in using language. Staff make children feel very welcome as soon as they arrive so that they settle quickly and are eager to play. Adults

promote children's independence well; they self-register by moving their photograph to show they are in school and choose activities with little adult guidance. Staff promote children's independent choices, and carefully time their intervention to give guidance only when it is needed. This is a pre-school where children feel very safe and secure.

Good use is made of the restricted space available indoors so that children have access to a suitable range of interesting learning activities from which to choose. There are many bright and colourful displays but none is at a height where children can see them in detail. Books are available but not displayed in a way that encourages their use. There are not enough opportunities for children to see the practical application of writing through labels and notices. The large outside area is well-equipped with large apparatus that encourages children to develop their motor skills. Most of this equipment is clean, bright and attractive although some is becoming worn. Although there are planned opportunities for mark-making and counting there are few outdoor opportunities for children to develop these skills actively and most choose other activities. Adults provide support children's language development through, constantly engaging them in conversation and so helping them to grow in understanding and confidence. Children enjoy their learning and make satisfactory progress overall.

Most children have a satisfactory understanding of healthy living; they know that the food at snack time is good for them although some need prompting to wash their hands before eating and after going to the toilet. They know that running around is good for them and many like the opportunities the pre-school gives them to do this. Behaviour is good. Children show a developing awareness of each other; they talk together, cooperate well and make a good contribution to the smooth running of the pre-school. At the end of the session they are keen to show their parents and carers what they have done and say they are looking forward to coming back tomorrow. Children's communication skills are developing satisfactorily; they listen to stories attentively and talk with developing fluency. However, there are not enough letters, shapes and numbers displayed around the room and not enough use is made of written signs and labels to support their reading, writing and mathematical development. Interactive displays are not always at a suitable level so that children can easily read the simple words and phrases for themselves. They have opportunities to develop their skills with computers. Through the daily choice of activities children's knowledge and understanding of the world is growing. Overall they are developing sound skills for the future.

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?	3
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	3

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	3
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding	2
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	3
The effectiveness of partnerships	2
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	3

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	3
The extent to which children feel safe	2
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	2
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	3

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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

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