

Little Acorns Shireoaks

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector Sharon Dickinson

Setting address Brancliffe Lane, Shireoaks, Worksop, Nottinghamshire, S81 8PW

Telephone number 01909 506666

Email

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*.

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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 Shireoaks opened in 1984 and moved to the current premises in 2000. It operates from a purpose-built building on the school site of St Lukes in Shireoaks, near Worksop, Nottinghamshire. The purpose-built accommodation is set on ground level and provides easy access to all. There is a secure outdoor play area. The pre-school is open Monday to Friday from 8.55am to 11.25am and then 12.40pm to 3.10pm, with a lunch club held between 11.25am and 12.40pm. The pre-school opens term-time only. Children attend for a variety of the sessions available.

The pre-school is registered, by Ofsted, on the Early Years Register and the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. A maximum of 26 children between the ages of two and eight years may attend the pre-school at any one time. There are currently 49 children on roll between the ages of two and five. Of these, there are 22 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from Shireoaks and the surrounding areas. The pre-school supports children with special educational needs and disabilities and children with English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs five staff, all of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications, including the manager who has a level 5 qualification. The setting is in receipt of support from the local authority.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

Staff build upon extensive knowledge of each child's individual needs and personalities to promote their welfare and development to an outstanding level. Children play an active role in the life of the pre-school and thoroughly enjoy their play and learning. A superb range of age-appropriate play activities and first hand experiences are planned that inspire and motivate children. Partnerships with parents and in the wider context are excellent and underpin the children's welfare and developmental progress. The management routinely reflects upon practice and pro-actively use the self-evaluation process to identify areas for development to ensure that the provision for children is continually improving.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- develop further outstanding practice in relation to risk assessments so that these cover everything with which a child may come in to contact, for example, with regards to all outings.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The staff team work collaboratively and are firmly focussed on providing extremely high quality childcare and learning. They benefit from very strong leadership. Management are highly committed to supporting the team's professional development to promote improved outcomes for children. For example, they have attended numerous training events, such as, first aid, health and hygiene and safeguarding which help to maintain children's safety. Staff have a robust understanding of their roles and responsibilities towards protecting children and know how to implement local safeguarding procedures. All adults who have unsupervised access to children are appropriately checked and the provision is organised to ensure that children are closely supervised at all times. The premises are very welcoming, safe and secure. The child-orientated environment provides excellent opportunities for children to become independent. For example, most toys and resources are housed on low-level shelving units which are clearly labelled, including pictorial symbols, to encourage children to self-select and make choices about their play and learning. Overall, comprehensive systems are in place for the maintenance of records which support the care and welfare of children. Staff conduct thorough risk assessments, which cover the indoor area and large group trips. However, risk assessments for smaller outings to the local area are not as detailed although staff's expert knowledge of effective systems to appraise and respond to risks in the environment ensures that hazards to children are minimised.

Robust, clearly-written policies also underpin everyday practice well and are shared with parents on entry. Clear and well-targeted plans are in place to promote continuous improvement and deliver improved outcomes for children. Management reliably use self-evaluation to identify strengths and weaknesses. Regular staff appraisals and team meetings successfully breed a culture of reflection; indeed the views of the whole team are actively sought to rigorously analyse all aspects of practice. The views of children and parents are also sought and acted upon to promote a better service. For example, parents requested longer opening hours to support working families; the pre-school responded by extending their service to full-day provision. All previous recommendations have been fully met. The pre-school now records and evaluates all fire evacuation practices. This ensures children's continued safety and independence are promoted throughout every aspect of the service so as to support their high levels of confidence and self-esteem.

Parents are extremely complimentary about the service provided. Useful information is exchanged at the start of a placement to ensure staff are fully aware of parent's wishes, children's individual needs and capabilities. A key person system is operating within the pre-school. The key person builds close relationships with the child and their parents and keeps them fully informed about the child's well-being and what they have been doing through discussion and regular reports outlining their child's progress and achievements. A wealth of information is made available to parents, including newsletters, information boards, information about future topics and how they can extend their child's learning at home. Partnerships

in the wider context are exemplary. Staff are proactive in building excellent relationships with other people involved with the children, providing a complete picture of the child and supporting continuity of care. For example, parents are signposted to the local children's centre for specialist advice and services and staff closely liaise with health professionals to provide an inclusive environment for children. Staff routinely promote equality and respect diversity. The needs of each child are carefully considered and all children are fully integrated within the provision and any additional needs are exceptionally well-supported.

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

Children feel extremely safe and secure at the pre-school because staff offer an extremely warm and welcoming environment. Children progress well as the staff have a superb understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage and know how children develop. A broad range of resources and exciting play opportunities are available, both indoors and outside, which are set out so that children can make independent choices in what they do. Staff skilfully extend topics and seasonal events, such as bonfire night, throughout all areas of learning. For example, children build rockets using construction sets, use streamers to dance to classical music and move like fireworks, talk about the firework code and colour firework pictures. Open-ended activities are also provided to encourage children to select their own resources and make connections in their learning. Staff routinely observe and assess children's learning to monitor their progress towards the early learning goals. They use the information obtained from observations to skilfully plan for children's next steps in learning, ensuring activities are highly challenging for children and tailored to their interests. A carefully-considered balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities is delivered through an exciting, fun and spontaneous curriculum. As a result, children are motivated to learn and are very keen to participate. They are making excellent progress towards the early learning goals.

Children's personal and emotional development is given high priority within the pre-school. New children are gently supported by key people to settle into the pre-school routine and quickly begin to develop relationships with staff and peers. At every opportunity children are encouraged to develop self-help skills, such as toileting and serving snacks. Children's communication skills are firmly developed through general discussion and enjoyable activities, such as sharing favourite books and stories. They enthusiastically share their 'news' with the group at register time and delight in making up narratives using puppets. Daily opportunities for mark-making are provided as children self-select from a range of media. Children have regular access to creative activities, such as, painting, drawing and collage. Staff support children's choice and creativity and promptly accommodate their preference to do hand printing instead of making a rocket out of junk materials. Children are not pressured by an 'end product' and their own representations are valued and often displayed. Children use their senses to explore malleable materials like sand and water. They particularly enjoy role play and ample resources are provided to support and extend their imagination. Children are also provided with exciting opportunities to work collaboratively and construct on a larger scale, such as when building dens with twigs and branches.

They fondly recall that a member of staff 'blew down' their house made of sticks just like big bad wolf in the story of 'The Three Little Pigs'. This supports creativity, language and social skills and inspires children's skills for the future as they eagerly participate in purposeful and meaningful play.

Basic mathematical concepts are introduced through practical and meaningful activities. For example, children compare and sort an array of buttons and sing number rhymes, such as 'Five Little Fireworks'. The children's knowledge and understanding of the world is increasing as staff provide an exciting range of first-hand experiences. Through a local community project the children have learned about traditional dances, songs, music and foods from Africa. Children have also made story boards outlining their home life and people who are important to them. They also explored real animal bones, brought in by the local butcher, when they learned about skeletons. Various seasonal and cultural celebrations are also recognised through practical activities, such as Chinese New Year where children took part in a Chinese dragon dance, tried using chopsticks and looked at Chinese scripts.

The good health and well-being of children is extremely well promoted. Through role play and discussion children show that they understand that wounds need to be kept clean to stop germs infecting them. Children develop a positive attitude to healthy living as the local dentist and district nurse visit the pre-school to talk to children about their work. Nutritious snacks are provided and parents are advised and encouraged to provide healthy lunchboxes. Drinking water is readily available at all times. Excellent opportunities are provided for outdoor play and fresh air on a daily basis. Children have free-flow in and outdoors for the majority of the session. A canopy ensures that children have access to the outdoor area in all weathers. Children benefit from regular outings and develop their understanding of the wider community through trips to the park, library and reciprocal visits to other pre-schools. Children are actively taught about safety issues through topics and as part of the daily routine. For example, children took part in a sponsored pedal push to raise funds for a road safety charity and they delight in playing 'stop' and 'go' on the bikes in response to road traffic signs. They are helped to understand danger but are also provided with the capability to deal with risk, within a supervised capacity, such as, when climbing trees on a trip to a country park. Staff utilise innovative methods to promote positive behaviour. Children are invited to agree to the pre-school 'rules' which are written up in their own words and illustrated by a pictorial symbol. These are displayed at child height on an interactive wall and routinely used by staff and children to remind others about expected behaviour. Good behaviour and children's achievements are recognised and celebrated using rewards, such as stickers. Children's confidence and self-esteem are fostered well because the staff frequently praise them and are sensitive to their individual personalities. Consequently, children behave excellently. Children are inquisitive learners who develop a 'can do' attitude to learning. This is because the staff have high expectations of their abilities and are dedicated to providing an environment where children take ownership of their learning and development.

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

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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

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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