

Little Acorns Day Nursery & Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	509972
Inspection date	07/10/2010
Inspector	Kathryn Clayton

Setting address	Little Acorns Day Nursery, 83-85 Hall Road, Hull, HU6 8QL
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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 Day Nursery and Pre-School is a privately owned setting that first opened in 2001. It is within the north of the city of Kingston upon Hull, approximately three miles from the city centre. The setting is registered to care for a maximum of 58 children. It is registered on the Early Years Register and compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. Childcare is provided in four playrooms over two floors. Children aged from three months to five years attend the setting and there are currently 104 children on roll, all in the early years age range. The nursery is open from 7.30am to 6pm, Monday to Friday all year around except for public holidays and Christmas week.

The nursery supports children for whom English is an additional language and is in receipt of funding for the provision of free early education for children aged two, three and four years. There are currently 20 staff employed, including two directors and two support staff. All childcare staff hold a minimum relevant level 3 qualification and the management team all have a level 4 qualification, and all are working towards their Degree in Childhood Studies. There is a staff member who has Early Years Professional Status. The setting has achieved Steps to Quality Level Two.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

Children are cared for in a very attractive, well-organised nursery where positive relationships and excellent support for children as individuals help them make very good progress in relation to their starting points. Safeguarding procedures are highly effective in promoting the welfare of all children attending. A very well-motivated management team offer staff excellent support and drive forward continuous sustained improvement to the nursery provision based on clear, thorough self-evaluation. There are highly effective partnerships with parents and other agencies which successfully promote the outcome for children attending.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- developing further the opportunities for more children to freely access the outdoor area.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Thorough safeguarding procedures protect all children attending. Security at the setting is a priority and a biometric system is in place at the entrance of the

premises which is only sensitive to staff member's finger prints. This allows arrivals and departures to be carefully monitored by staff. Risk assessments of all aspects of the premises, toys, equipment and outings are thorough and regularly reviewed. All staff undertake safeguarding training as part of their induction and thoroughly understand the signs and symptoms that would cause them to be concerned about a child's welfare. Close links to other agencies allow any concerns to be quickly addressed.

The leadership and management team are highly motivated towards ensuring the nursery makes ongoing improvement. The setting is a 'host nursery' for the area and shares their very effective practice with other settings. The well-qualified staff enjoy very good training opportunities and many are undertaking further qualifications. The team take on initiatives such as 'Every Child a Talker' and training in helping children's social and emotional aspects of development, which once implemented have a positive impact on the progress made by children. There is a shared ethos within the setting which means that the nursery works very well as a cohesive unit. Evaluation of the service includes the views of staff, parents and children. Children's progress is continually monitored and information about the outcome for children is effectively evaluated on an ongoing basis.

All areas of the nursery are attractive and well organised with excellent resources including a well-planned stimulating outdoor area. Although this space is very well used throughout the day, only some children have free flow indoor and outdoor experiences that enable them to choose when they would like to play outdoors. Careful consideration has been given to creating areas which enhance children's experiences, such as a secure, enclosed hideaway cube where babies can explore heuristic play with natural objects. Sensitive support and working closely with the parents of children for whom English is an additional language means they settle successfully. Information is available in a number of languages for parents and staff learn simple key words in the children's home language. Signing is used with children as a communication aid throughout the nursery. Parents are asked to provide labels for familiar objects in their own language to help children feel more familiar with their surroundings and to promote their learning.

The nursery develops extremely positive relationships with parents. Parents are encouraged to be actively involved in decision making and to make their views known. For example, there is a parents committee who meet periodically and give their views on any improvements that can be made. Questionnaires are sent out annually and reviewed by management. There is a wealth of information in the nursery about how children learn and how parents could support their children at home. Parents can borrow items from the nursery such as musical instruments and books. They are asked to comment on their children's progress in a termly report and they are also encouraged to observe their children's play at home. Staff make sure this information is used to inform future planning for their child. Very strong established links with other agencies and other providers delivering the Early Years Foundation Stage where children attend aids their learning. Children are helped to settle more easily when they move setting as staff provide them with pictures of the areas they are going to be based before they visit with their parents.

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

Children are interested and greatly engaged in play. They are especially excited by their experiences and particularly enjoy outdoor play. Staff start with the interests of the child as being central to the planning and assessment process. They monitor children's engagement and this has led to improvements in progress. Staff understand how children learn and use the information given to them by parents to help engage children. The choices made by children aid their independence. For example, they choose what type of fruit they like to eat at snack time and prepare it themselves. Children learn about the benefits of a healthy lifestyle as antibacterial gel is readily available at the entrance to the nursery, they are taught how to wash their hands from a very young age. They eat wholesome freshly made meals, such as chilli with potato wedges, sponge pudding and custard. Staff encourage children to learn how to use tools safely. For example, they peel real carrots in the role play kitchen. Babies and young toddlers move confidently up steps and down a slide in their playroom. Children play an active part in their learning and are keen and interested, for example, when they take turns to play with a programmable toy, this helps to develop their understanding of direction, and through discussion promotes their language and skills for the future.

A number of well-resourced, comfortable book areas with good quality books enhance children's enjoyment of stories. They enjoy listening to these in small groups or individually. Circle times are supported by the 'Every Child a Talker' programme which is successfully implemented to ensure children have excellent opportunities for language development. Children have access to a very wide range of mark-making opportunities including a very large chalk board outdoors. Children show a real interest in the natural world. Younger children enjoy looking at a giant snail they have in their room and are encouraged to dig for snails in the garden. Outdoor there are tunnels, tyres, a climbing frame, a large sandpit, and wooden steps which all enhance children's opportunities to develop their physical skills. Children understand the language of size as they sort and match bears. All rooms are number rich and very young babies and older children thoroughly enjoy joining in with singing number rhymes. Through role play, music, dancing, play dough, collage and painting activities, children are able to express themselves and this successfully fosters their creativity.

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	2
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
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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