

# Little Acorns

Inspection report for early years provision

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**Unique reference number** 509573  
**Inspection date** 11/04/2011  
**Inspector** Lilyanne Taylor

**Setting address** St John's Room, 19 St John's Road, Hedge End,  
Southampton, Hampshire, SO30 4AF

**Telephone number** 01489 795860

**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*.

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 has been registered since 1997. It is a privately owned day nursery and operates from a converted parish hall that is situated in a residential area of Hedge End, Southampton. The premises has two floors and is used solely for by the nursery. There is a fully enclosed outdoor play area.

The nursery is registered to care for a maximum of 60 children under eight years at any one time; all of these may be in the early years age group. Currently there are 84 early years age group children on roll. Care is also able to be provided for children aged over five years. This provision is registered on the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. The setting supports children who speak English as an additional language and they are in receipt of funding for the provision of free early education to children aged three and four.

The owners employ 14 members of staff; of these 10 hold early years qualifications, two at level 2, five at level 3, two at level 4 and one at level 6. Some staff are currently working towards achieving qualifications; one at level 2 and three at level 3.

The nursery is open each weekday from 7.30am to 6pm for 51 weeks of the year, closing only for the week of Christmas and all Bank Holidays.

## The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Staff have a good understanding of each child as an individual which enables them to meet all children's needs effectively. Policies and procedures which underpin the safe management of the provision are effectively implemented and promote positive outcomes for children. Overall an inclusive environment is provided and most aspects of children's learning are effectively promoted across all areas of the setting. The staff team is continuously looking at ways they can enhance the provision they provide for children; a recent improvement made means babies now have free access to a secure area where they can play in the fresh air.

## What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- display posters, pictures and dual language print that reflect the backgrounds of all children and families attending
- support children to become fully independent by enabling them to be more involved with routine activities, for example at snack and meal times allow them to pour their own drinks, serve their own food and collect their own

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- check resources are maintained in good working order so children are able to gain the most learning and enjoyment from them paying particular attention to ensuring batteries in programmable toys are replaced when necessary.

## **The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision**

Staff have a sound understanding of child protection issues and procedures to ensure children's welfare is fully protected and secure. Robust procedures the nursery follows with regards to the recruitment and vetting of new staff and for the ongoing checking of existing staff means children are only cared for by adults who are suitable to be around children. Risk assessments carried out daily ensure all areas and equipment children have access to remain safe. Security is given a high priority; no persons are able to gain entry to areas children are cared for in unless a member of staff allows. Visitors are requested to show their means of identification which is then verified by the manager. The effective deployment of staff ensures children are supervised and well cared for at all times. The use of a baby monitor as well as visual checks ensures sleeping children are kept safe.

Children have access to a wide range of resources and equipment which are well organised, kept clean and overall maintained in a play worthy condition. Children are able to move freely, selecting resources of their choice, which increases their independence and builds their confidence. All children are respected and treated as individuals. However, the physical environment does not positively reflect the cultural and linguistic identity of all children and their families in attendance.

Children benefit by being cared for by staff who regularly attend training to ensure their knowledge of childcare and child development remains up to date. Staff work well together as a team and strive for constant improvement through regular meetings. Recommendations raised at the last inspection have been successfully addressed which has had a positive impact on the outcomes of children. The setting is able to highlight their strengths and they are aware of areas they wish to develop further. For example, their priority at this time is to enhance the outdoor play area by providing a range of natural resources so children will be able to use their imagination and create their own learning ideas.

Staff work in partnership with parents to ensure all children reach their full potential. Each child has a key person who liaises regularly with parents. They discuss the individual progress children are making and what the plans are for their next steps in learning. Home link diaries written for children in the baby department provide parents with information of the care their children have been provided, how they have spent their day and any achievements they have made. Parents of children new to the setting are able to stay with their children until they are settled. During this time they are able to get to know the staff team, see how the setting operates and also the types of activities their children will be involved in to enable them to make progress in all six areas of their learning and development. Through the effective systems in place for liaising with other agencies staff are

able to ensure the care and learning needs of all children are met effectively.

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

Overall children are making good progress towards the early learning goals in all areas of their learning and development. Observations staff make on the children are used to monitor their progress and highlight the next steps in their development. Children's records of assessment are shared with parents each term so they too can be involved in their children's learning and education.

All children show they feel safe and secure; they readily go to staff for support and seek them out for a bit of extra tender loving care when they are feeling emotional.

Younger children are beginning to develop their hand and eye coordination movement; they stack cubes on top of one another and shake plastic bottles filled with beads, glitter and water. They enjoy lots of sensory activities such as playing with jelly and baked beans and with support they gain the experience of feeling paint on their feet and hands.

The majority of time children are able to be independent; they generate their own learning by confidently choosing equipment and toys they wish to play with. Children enjoy painting and are given time to create and express their intentions. They develop their pre-writing skills by making marks using chalks, crayons and pencils. Children are encouraged to label their own work and some older children are beginning to write their name.

Children use a computer to support their learning; they carefully manoeuvre the mouse to draw pictures and use the keyboard to type in the letters of their name. With support children are beginning to gain the skill and the knowledge required in order to print out their work. Programmable resources such as calculators, phones and musical toys are not always maintained in good working order. Consequently, children are not able to get the most learning and enjoyment from them.

Children enjoy looking at books and are learning how to handle books carefully. They are beginning to gain an understanding that print carries meaning through the resources and wall displays they see in the environment. However, children are not gaining an awareness that print can be written in languages other than English. Children learn about some cultures of others through discussion, planned activities and parents who come into the setting to show children their traditional costumes. Children are becoming confident communicators and they behave well; they exchange conversations with staff and listen and carry out instructions. Children are very sociable and play well together, sharing and taking turns. They learn about their own safety through guidance they receive from staff and their regular involvement in the practising of fire drills.

All children are encouraged to lead a healthy lifestyle and spend time out in the

fresh air daily. They develop their large motor skills using a range of equipment such as slides, balancing blocks and ride on toys. Children enjoy the time they spend digging in the soil and while doing so they learn how to handle small tools such as a trowel and fork safely. They hunt for bugs and insects and use magnifying glasses to take a closer look at their findings. Children are becoming aware of healthy eating and thoroughly enjoy the range of nutritious snacks and meals they are served. Through the guidance and role modelling of staff children are becoming aware of what constitutes good hygiene practice.

## 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

<b>How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?</b>	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	2

### The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	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

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### Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

<b>Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	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

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