

# Little Acorns

Inspection report for early years provision

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**Unique reference number**

EY294250

**Inspection date**

12/05/2011

**Inspector**

Tina Mason

**Setting address**

The Cabin, Barnard Road, Leigh-on-Sea, Essex, SS9 3PH

**Telephone number**

07587157595

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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 is run by a committee. It opened at the current premises in 2004 and operates from a scout hall in Leigh-on-Sea, Essex. The pre-school serves the local area. The pre-school is accessible to all children and there is a fully enclosed area available for outdoor play.

The pre-school opens Monday to Friday during school term times. Sessions are from 9.30am until 12.30pm. Afternoon sessions run from 1pm until 4pm. Children are able to attend for a variety of sessions. The pre-school is registered on the Early Years Register and on both the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. A maximum of 26 children may attend the pre-school at any one time, all of whom may be on the Early Years Register. There are currently 55 children attending who are within the Early Years Foundation Stage. The pre-school provides funded early education for three and four-year-olds. It supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs ten members of childcare staff. Of these, nine are qualified to NVQ level 3 equivalent or above. The nursery receives support from the local authority.

## **The overall effectiveness of the early years provision**

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

Children's individual needs are met exceptionally well. They enjoy an immensely inclusive environment where there is a strong emphasis on recognising the uniqueness of each child. This results in planning being very specific to the learning and development needs of individual children, ensuring they make consistently excellent progress in all areas relative to their starting points. Systems for monitoring the effectiveness of the provision are extremely effective in all areas and ensure that future planning is very well focused to achieve and maintain high quality outcomes for children.

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

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

- further promoting children's independence when playing outside and provide them with the ability to make greater choices in their play.

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

Protecting children from the risk of harm is given extremely high priority within the setting and all staff regularly update their safeguarding knowledge through training and personal development. This results in staff who are secure in their awareness of issues that may raise concerns regarding abuse or neglect and confident in the actions they would take in order to safeguard children. Dynamic management results in a knowledgeable and enthusiastic staff team who implement the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage extremely well. This is demonstrated in the excellent routines and procedures that are in place to ensure children remain safe and secure at all times. Employment procedures are robust, ensuring all new members of staff are suitable to work with children, and there are clear systems in place to confirm the ongoing suitability of existing staff. Excellent risk assessments and daily routines ensure children remain safe and secure at all times. These cover all aspects of the premises, resources and excursions into the wider community. Risk assessments are reviewed regularly in order to take account of children's specific needs, for example, considering where additional safety precautions may be appropriate to ensure no child, or groups of children, are excluded from access to activities and resources.

All required documentation that supports children's wellbeing is in place and maintained extremely well. Processes of self-evaluation are excellent. Managers have successfully promoted a culture of reflective practice within the setting, using team meetings, appraisals and regular discussions to involve staff in considering all aspects of the provision and identifying opportunities to make improvements that will benefit children. There is an immensely strong focus on inclusive practice within the setting. This is reflected in the thoughtful and well-targeted plans for future improvement, for example, developing the staff team's skills in providing them with 'SEAD' training. This helps to support children's social and emotional aspects of their development, resulting in children learning from a very young age that they are special, and the staff team actively listens to their needs and acts on what they say. The layout of the room provides children with a vibrant, stimulating environment where toys and play materials are arranged to plan, support individual enjoyment and strongly encourage independence. Storage boxes are labelled with pictures so that children can easily find the equipment they need and allow children to make choices about their play. The structure of the day ensures that all children have free-flow access to outdoor play. The setting has developed the outside area which offers children wider learning opportunities, which includes a woodland area. However, children are not provided with opportunities to self-select activities outside to further promote their independence in making choices in their play.

Staff have developed strong partnerships with other agencies involved in supporting specialist needs of individual children. This results in very good cooperative planning to ensure children's learning and development needs are comprehensively met. The positive and proactive approach to partnership working is also reflected in the very good processes in place to share information with other providers of the Early Years Foundation Stage where children attend more than

one setting, for instance those that also attend nurseries or who are collected by childminders. This ensures consistency in planning to meet children's individual learning objectives. Staff develop excellent relationships with parents and carers and extremely effective processes of sharing information ensure that they are very well informed regarding children's individual needs. Settling-in procedures are very good, enabling parents and children to get to know key adults and ensure that children feel confident and secure when they begin regular attendance. Parents are provided with extremely good information about all aspects of the provision and have frequent opportunities to discuss their children's learning and development. Staff actively involve them in their children's learning, providing ideas for activities they can do at home with them.

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

Children's welfare, learning and development are promoted extremely well. Staff use their good observations of children effectively in ensuring that planning focuses on promoting specific objectives for each child and in identifying their next steps in learning. Children's individual records are extremely well maintained and contain a wealth of evidence that reflects their excellent progress towards the early learning and development goals. Children are eager and enthusiastic learners who make excellent progress because they are extended and challenged very well. The staff team use children's interests effectively to develop them in all areas. For example, a member of staff has undertaken training in 'Forest Schooling' and explained that the philosophy of this is to encourage and inspire the children through positive outdoor experiences. The project allows the children to become comfortable with an outdoor approach to education and play whilst in familiar surroundings. Children's behaviour is excellent. They are confident and happy with high self-esteem because they are secure that their individual needs will be met. Children understand simple ground rules that are focused on showing respect and care for each other. This results in children playing and working cooperatively together.

Children have excellent opportunities to develop their knowledge and understanding of the world as they grow a selection of vegetables, flowers and herbs. They freely tend to this area as they have access to an outside tap and watering cans. Children queue up and fill their watering cans to go and water the soil and flowers. Children are very competent in using the computer, moving the mouse with ease to navigate around the different programmes. An excellent range of planned activities, displays, toys and resources, depicting positive images of people from different cultures, races and those with disabilities, help children to learn about the wider world. Both staff and children make good use of the book corner to sit and look at books and listen to stories. Children are given opportunities to mark make with pencils, paints, crayons and chalks, and many of the older children can write and recognise their own name. Many of the children demonstrate a very good awareness of position, size and shape as they play with the large wooden bricks, make collage pictures and make different sized tadpoles out of play dough. In addition, when cutting up the grapes at snack time children know that a whole grape cut into two pieces makes two halves. Children have lots

of opportunities to explore and have fun in the garden area. They are provided with excellent opportunities to explore natural materials. The staff team have developed a wooded area which is full of natural resources only. There are two sunken sand pits on the ground, one full of sand and another full of soil, allowing excellent opportunities for the children to dig and explore using lots of different tools. Children enjoy making marks with paint brushes and pots of water. They are able to wet the brushes and make marks on the fences, tables and floors in the garden area. Children also make excellent use of resources indoors and outside as they develop their own active play, such as using climbing and balancing equipment, throwing and catching balls, riding bikes and scooters and building dens. Children are provided with excellent opportunities to use different tools to develop their hand-eye coordination. For example, they enjoy using hammer and nails under close supervision of the staff team.

Excellent routines and procedures that support children's wellbeing are implemented effectively by the staff team in order that children develop a very good understanding of personal health and safety issues. Frequent practices of emergency evacuation procedures result in children being well informed about how to conduct themselves safely in the event of a fire. Health promotion with children is very good. Children demonstrate their understanding of the importance of personal hygiene. For example, they show their awareness of how illness and infection can be spread in the care with which they cover their mouths when they cough and sneeze and when they dispose of used tissues appropriately. The setting promotes healthy eating. Snacks are provided and take account of children's individual dietary requirements, such as food allergies. Children are provided with a choice of fruit, water and milk to drink, and snack times are used very well to develop a range of skills. For example, children select their own cups and plates and they are able to butter their own bread. Staff ensure that parents are made aware of the setting's sickness procedures and any exclusion times following particular illnesses. Procedures for the administration of any medicines required by children are rigorous and implemented well by staff, and any accidents or incidents involving children are clearly recorded and records shared with parents.

## 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>	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	1

### 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>	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

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