

Little Acorns Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number

122751

Inspection date

21/06/2011

Inspector

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Setting address

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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 has been established since the 1960's. The pre-school is a committee run provision and operates from a village hall in Tatsfield, Kent. Children have shared access to a small enclosed outdoor play area. The pre-school serves the local area and children attend for a variety of sessions. The pre-school is open Monday to Friday, during school term-times. Sessions are from 9am to 12pm. Afternoon sessions are Tuesday and Thursday 12.30pm to 2.30pm. The pre-school is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. A maximum of 26 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. There are currently 48 children in the early years age group on roll. The pre-school is able to support children with special educational needs/or disabilities. The setting receives funding for free early education for three- and four-year-olds. The pre-school employs seven members of staff. Of these, four hold early years qualifications and two are working towards qualification status. The pre-school is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance and receives support and advice from local authority early years professionals.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children arrive happily, eager to meet their friends. They make good progress in their learning and development towards the Early Learning Goals because, overall, staff have a secure understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage framework. The partnership with parents is sound, although currently they are not fully involved in their children's learning. Children play in a safe environment although risk assessments are not fully completed for outings. The self-evaluation is evolving and future improvements for development have been identified, such as the planning for new doors so children can easily access the outdoor play area.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To meet the specific requirements of the EYFS, the registered person must:

- carry out a full risk assessment for each type of outing, which includes an assessment of required adult:child ratios (Safeguarding and promoting children's welfare) 22/07/2011

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

- improve the learning environment to ensure it is rich in signs, symbols, notices, numbers and words that take into account children's different interests, home backgrounds and cultures
- develop the use of reflective practice and self-evaluation to identify strengths and priorities for development that will continuously improve the quality of the provision for all children
- involve parents in practical ways to support their child's learning and development and gather their views on a regular basis regarding their children's progress

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children are safeguarded effectively through clear procedures that continually promote their welfare. For example, child protection procedures are understood by all staff and a range of in-depth information is available for them to refer to in the event of a concern. Only adults suitable to come into contact with the children are able to do so, and clear recruitment and vetting procedures are in place. These measures help to keep children safe from harm at all times. Effective risk assessment means that children can play and learn with safe boundaries. The written record of the risk assessment is underpinned by daily premises checks, which help to prevent accidental injury to children wherever they are. However, the group have not implemented a risk assessment for each type of specific outing, and this is a breach of requirements. The required records are in place and a good range of policies and procedures underpin practice and promote children's welfare.

Equality and diversity issues are embedded into all areas of practice. The development of every child is well promoted. Staff have attended training updates and strive to ensure that they offer an inclusive setting in partnership with parents. The learning environment is equally accessible to all the children attending, including toys which may not be available can be chosen by the children from photos in a book which helps to contribute towards their unique learning and development needs. Toys and resources promote realistic images of diversity and children have every opportunity to learn about the differences between people in society. As well as this, the children celebrate a range of festivals, such as Easter and Chinese New Year which teaches children to respect diversity

Self-evaluation is evolving with support from the staff. The strengths and weaknesses of the provision are identified and evaluated against the impact on the outcomes for children. Future aims include continuing to develop the outside area and meeting parental needs. The group has a clear commitment to driving improvement. For example, previous inspection recommendations have been met effectively and everyone involved with the provision contributes to the improvements made. There is a strong staff team who are supported by a committee and they work together well as a stable team. Staff have participated in a variety of training opportunities and use the knowledge and experience they gain to bring about improvements. The committee support the staff and this has a positive impact on outcomes for children.

Partnerships with parents are sound. Parents receive information when their children start, giving them an insight into the aims and objectives of the setting. Thereafter, daily discussions enable parents and staff to share children's recent

experiences. Parents value the service provided and feel their children make good progress and have very positive views. They describe staff as "very friendly, approachable and professional" and rate the standard of care that their children receive as "good". Partnership working promotes consistency of care for all children. Although, there is currently no system to ensure parents access their children's records regularly or contribute their views to their children's individual profile files. The setting works enthusiastically alongside a range of professionals to enhance the learning and development of each child. They have close, ongoing links with outside agencies, local early years providers and schools which promotes continuity of care and learning.

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

Children arrive happily and confidently. They find their name to self-register with their parents and hang their coats on named pegs before finding an activity of their choice. They freely move around the hall, making decisions about activities, such as crawling through tunnels or making glitter pictures on plates, with many children playing co-operatively with their peers, showing good relationships. Children have opportunity to play outside on a daily basis. Photographs show children enjoying many activities such as sand, water play and using large climbing apparatus developing their large physical skills. Children develop their knowledge through art and craft activities finding out about working with colour, texture, shape, space and form in two and three dimensions thoroughly engaging their attention. Children use a range of construction materials to build, join and create structures whilst developing their problem solving skills.

Staff make regular observations of the children and generally record evaluations and next steps for their key children. Children enjoy a varied and interesting range of play activities to support their progress towards the early learning goals. The staff work closely with the children, listening to what they say and encouraging them to express their own ideas. Children are able to select activities from the available resources which are chosen to reflect children's interests and learning needs. Additional resources are available from the storage cupboards. The staff make flexible daily plans, covering all areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage, using information from observations, which are carried out in many different formats.

Mark-making equipment is easily accessed by the children and they are encouraged throughout the session to practise writing in many ways. Electronic toys such as megaphones, a compact disc player and programmable toys help children gain an understanding of information and communication technology, in addition to using the computer. They listen eagerly to stories and are very keen to communicate, with staff supporting the less confident children. The book area is welcoming, with comfortable cushions. Children freely choose to look at books on their own or ask an adult to read to them, developing their language and literacy skills. They complete jigsaws with letters and pictures, beginning to link the sounds and letters with the aid of the picture. However, there are limited opportunities to see print in their environment in the form of labels, signs, posters and words, this is the same for numbers in their environment to support their sight recognition and

familiarity. They use the small world toys, some reflecting positive images of diversity, to develop their imagination with scenarios involving their favourite super-heroes or situations from home. They use a wide variety of equipment, such as bean bags, to practise their catching and balancing skills, while developing hand and eye coordination.

Children learn about living a healthy lifestyle as they have daily opportunities to play outdoors in all weather. Children have access to drinking water at all times during the session and show their independence at snack time as they each bring in their own healthy option from home. Hygiene routines are promoted with children understanding the importance of washing hands before eating and after using the toilet. They all use soap and paper towels, to prevent cross infection. Staff continue these good hygiene procedures and ensure all the tables are cleaned with antibacterial spray before children have snack and meal times. A sick child policy and health and safety policy are implemented effectively to promote children's well-being. Children are generally well behaved and play well together. This is because good staffing ratios apply with effective support and good role modelling. The use of tools, including timers, help children to learn about sharing, taking turns and tidying up. Staff work in an upbeat manner and offer plenty of praise and encouragement to the children for their achievements. As a result, children's welfare and self esteem are promoted effectively.

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?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	2

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	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	3

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	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