

Little Acorns Baby Unit & Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	EY418098
Inspection date	06/07/2011
Inspector	Jan Burnet
Setting address	21 Parkhill Drive, COVENTRY, CV5 7PF
Telephone number	02476402277
Email	stephanie.ison@littleacornsbu.co.uk
Type of setting	Childcare on non-domestic premises

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2011

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).

Please see our website for more information about each childcare provider. We publish inspection reports, conditions of registration and details of complaints we receive where we or the provider take action to meet the requirements of registration.

Description of the setting

Little Acorns Baby Unit and Pre-School was established in 2003 and was re-registered in 2010. The nursery is privately owned and operates from a converted house in a residential area north-west of Coventry city centre. The main entrance is at the side of the building and is accessed via nine steps. There is one step to a door at the front. Playrooms are on the ground and first floors, with children over the age of two being cared for on the upper level. There is a fully enclosed outdoor play area at the rear of the building.

The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register for a maximum of 36 children at any one time. There are currently 63 children on roll. Operational times are Monday to Friday from 8am until 6pm all year round, except for bank holidays and one week at Christmas.

A team of 12 staff care for the children and all hold early years qualifications. The nursery holds Pre-school Learning Alliance membership.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Staff promote children's welfare effectively and meet children's individual developmental needs well, although the range of experiences for babies has some limits. Health and safety within the building and garden is given a high priority. The provider, manager and staff are aware of strengths and areas for improvement and they work together to ensure that the needs of children, parents and carers are well met. Information obtained from parents helps staff to identify and address children's differences effectively. The partnership with parents is good and the staff have experience of liaising with external agencies or services to ensure a child gets the support he or she needs. The partnership with other early years providers is not fully effective.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- extend opportunities for babies to explore and experiment with a range of media, and provide low-level climbing equipment to physically stimulate and challenge toddlers
- develop the partnership with other early years providers in order to ensure coherence of care and learning.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children are cared for in a stimulating, warm and welcoming environment. Staff assess and successfully minimise risks on a daily basis and risk assessment records are comprehensive. The provider ensures that procedures for recruitment, selection and induction are clear and staff members' suitability is checked thoroughly before they have unsupervised access to children. The provider ensures that staff are aware of their responsibilities with regard to protecting children from abuse in accordance with the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage requirements and the Coventry Safeguarding Children Board. Good procedures and practice ensure that good health and nutrition is promoted well and necessary steps are taken to prevent the spread of infection.

The provider, manager and staff are working well together to make sure that their knowledge, skills and experience combine in order to meet the care and learning needs of children effectively. A priority for improvement is identified as making sure that the outdoor play area meets the needs of babies as well as toddlers and older pre-school children. Staff are motivated to continually improve their knowledge and skills and advice and support from local authority development workers is sought and valued. A strong commitment to improvement is demonstrated with the use of an 'Infant/toddler environment rating scale' (ITERS) and an 'Early childhood environment rating scale' (ECERS) as evaluative tools in order for staff to be aware of their current practice and make plans to further develop. All required documentation and records are kept up-to-date and in good order. Resources are chosen for their quality and durability as well as to meet children's developmental needs effectively.

The partnership with parents is strong. Parents are extremely happy with the service provided and are keen to share positive views on; verbal and written communication, relationships with staff and the environment. A settling-in procedure is arranged with each parent according to their child's needs. Written information provided for parents is good and includes a prospectus that contains detail on the six areas of learning, and posters that include contact details for Ofsted and the Coventry Safeguarding Children Board. Information obtained from parents is very good with regard to each child's backgrounds and needs.

Staff ensure that they provide effective inclusive care for children and they demonstrate a good awareness of each child as an individual. Children are encouraged to recognise their own unique qualities and characteristics they share with others. They learn about similarities and differences through play, for example, they gain an awareness of different foods, clothing, language and music. Toys and play equipment reflect positive images and meet the developmental needs of the children very well. The provider and staff have experience of liaising with external agencies or services to ensure that a child gets the support he or she needs. Staff are aware of the benefits of establishing links with other providers in order to provide consistency of care and education for children attending different settings. Information is readily made available for other early years providers but coherence of care and learning is not fully effective because information from

other providers has not been provided.

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

Children are making good progress and staff are clear of their responsibilities with regard to ensuring that all children are challenged effectively. The range of resources and activities meet their needs well. Each child has a folder that contains observations, photographs and examples of art work. Parents are asked to provide information on achievements at home so that staff can plan next steps in learning. Parents are invited to take their child's assessment folder home and add their own comments, and also share the book with other early years providers.

Children are settled, secure, confident and happy. Young children play cooperatively alongside each other and enjoy the involvement of staff in their play. Older children play together in pairs or small groups and are learning to share and take turns, for example, they use a timer for 10 minute periods when using the computer. Children develop good manipulative skills as they play with a variety of small toys and tools that are appropriate for their different stages of development. Older children skilfully use a knife and fork at mealtimes and develop good pencil control as they write for a range of purposes in the role play area and at the graphics table. Young children play with posting and stacking toys and staff talk with them about matching shapes so that they can post successfully. Young children make marks with their fingers in cornflour, paint and sand, but opportunities for the babies to take part in activities of this kind are limited.

Mathematical language and problem solving is part of the daily routine. At snack time children decide how many pieces of apple and banana they would like and then they select the chosen amount. Children recite numbers as the play and staff promote counting with one-to-one correspondence as they support children's play, for example, in the garden children step from one fixed log to another and count their steps. They are then helped to count and match the corresponding number of fingers. Children aged two years and over move freely between three playrooms on the first floor. One room is primarily for art and craft activities, sand and water, one is for role play and construction and one is for books, puzzles and games. Their creativity is promoted well. Children enjoy singing and moving to music, drawing and painting and playing with role play resources. Older children join together in imaginary play situations and younger children repeat situations familiar to them.

Older children express themselves confidently and are learning to speak in turn and listen to others. They learn to recognise letters and the sounds that they make and play games that encourage them to recognise words that rhyme. Babies and young children enjoy looking at picture books and ones that contain different sounds and textures. Older children choose favourite stories for staff to read. Children are active and understand the benefits of physical activity and the effect of exercise on their bodies. They practise kicking, catching and throwing, and they learn to steer and pedal tricycles. Plans are being made to develop an area of the

garden for babies and toddlers but currently they do not have access to any low-level climbing equipment to physically stimulate and challenge them effectively. Healthy eating is given a very high priority and children develop an awareness of their own growth needs in relation to the plants that they are growing in tubs in the garden.

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	3
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	2

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
------------------------------------------------------------------	---

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

Any complaints about the inspection or report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

