

Little Acorns

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector

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Setting address

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Type of setting

Childcare - Non-Domestic

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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 Childrens Day Nursery opened in 2000 and is privately owned. It operates from three rooms in the Oaks Community Centre, which is situated in Stocks Lane, Penketh an area of Warrington. The day nursery also has occasional access to the main hall of the centre and the playing field of the adjoining school.

The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register and both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. It provides care for up to 52 children aged from around 18 months to the end of the early years age range. The nursery is registered to provide care for children up to their eighth birthday. The nursery opens five days a week all year round. Sessions are from 7.45am until 6pm. There are currently 98 children in the early years age group on roll. The nursery receives funding for the provision of free 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.

A team of 22 staff work with the children, 17 of whom hold appropriate childcare qualifications. Two members of staff are currently working towards a childcare qualification. The manager holds a qualification at level 5 and the owner holds Early Years Professional status.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

Children make rapid progress in their learning and development because overall, staff provide a wide range of interesting, challenging and well-planned activities. Strong leadership and management drives effective practice and continuous improvement. The staff are very enthusiastic and committed to their own professional development and to improving outcomes for children. Children's safety, security and emotional well-being is given the utmost priority. Children's individual needs are met extremely well because of the excellent partnerships with parents, other professionals and local schools.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- find more ways of enabling children to make independent choices about moving between the indoor and outdoor environment.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children are safe and secure in the welcoming nursery environment because staff give their well-being the highest priority. Robust recruitment and induction procedures ensure all staff are appropriately vetted in order to assess their suitability to work with children. Staff are very clear about their roles and responsibilities in keeping children safe and take great care to identify and minimise risks.

Children's interests and abilities are assessed very effectively by careful and thorough observation of them at play. Staff use this information well to plan activities that support children in making rapid progress in their learning and development. The nursery is very well resourced and staff work hard to create inviting play spaces that encourage children to initiate their own purposeful play. They interact very sensitively with children to challenge their thinking and encourage their progress. For example, they encourage them to experiment with building blocks to work out for themselves how to construct stable structures.

The team of staff feel highly valued and supported by the strong management team. They regularly reflect on their practice and are committed to their ongoing professional development. They enthusiastically access training and share new ideas with their colleagues, such as how to create interactive displays and encourage sensory exploration using treasure baskets. Several members of the team are inspired to challenge themselves and strive for higher qualifications. Staff develop meaningful action plans that effectively drive improvement because they critically evaluate the service they provide and take account of the views of children, parents and other professionals. For example, they acknowledge the challenge of enabling children to freely access the outdoor play area due to the physical layout of the premises and seek ways to provide children with opportunities to make independent choices.

The nursery provides a very welcoming environment. The well-established staff team inspires the confidence of parents and encourages the children to get involved with the wide range of activities on offer. Children feel respected and valued as they are able to contribute to the lively and colourful displays of their work, sometimes writing their own labels. Staff deploy themselves very effectively to support children's individual choices and also lead activities that are carefully planned to enhance children's progress. Children receive plenty of individual attention because of the high adult ratios. This also enables staff to have time to observe the children carefully and plan their next steps for learning.

Staff pay very good attention to welcoming and including all children and their families. Children enjoy learning about cultural differences as they sing songs in other languages and learn about different celebrations and festivals. Staff acknowledge children's different styles of learning and ensure that all children are supported extremely well in making progress in their learning. They provide a range of mark-making and exploratory activities outdoors to capture the interest of boys, and introduce superheroes to engage them in role play. Children with

additional needs are supported very effectively through individual planning and liaison with a range of other professionals to provide specialised expertise.

Children's individual needs are met exceptionally well because of the excellent partnerships with parents. Staff get to know the children very well during their individually tailored settling-in periods. Parents highly value this sensitive introduction to the nursery. They are delighted with the progress their children make and regularly review and discuss children's learning journeys with staff. Very strong partnerships are forged with other professionals and with local schools to ensure a smooth transition when it is time for children to move on to school.

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

Children enjoy playing outdoors in the fresh air and love to exercise their bodies, whether moving to music indoors or climbing, running and riding wheeled toys outdoors. They enjoy regular, nutritious meals and snacks which maintain their energy levels throughout the day. Children have a very good understanding of the value of different types of food and talk about the need to brush their teeth if they eat chocolate or sugar. They learn about healthy eating as they help to prepare meals and also grow vegetables in the garden. They are very familiar with good personal hygiene routines and carefully wash their hands before meals.

Children develop a good sense of how to keep themselves safe. They help to devise rules, such as not running indoors and limiting the number of children at particular activities. They assess risks for themselves when they decide how high to climb on outdoor apparatus and are familiar with the steps that adults take to maintain safety in the nursery. For example they place signs up to alert others that the floor is wet when they notice someone mopping up a spill.

Children's behaviour is very good. They play well together and learn how to share and take turns. They are proud to have their good behaviour acknowledged by praise from staff and know that their views are valued as staff take the time and trouble to listen to them, even those who are less articulate than others. For example when a young child asks for more play dough, even though she has a large amount, the member of staff asks additional questions and discovers the child would like more glitter in her play dough. Children enjoy finding out about each other's cultural differences as they learn to sing songs in other languages or find out about a range of festivals and celebrations. They are active members of the local community. They enjoy visit to the local shops, museum, library, church and school. Their nursery is situated within a community centre where they entertain local groups. They create artwork to display in the local shop and also take their pictures to residents of the adjacent sheltered accommodation.

Children make excellent progress in their learning and development because they have a very positive attitude towards their learning. Their enthusiasm to participate in activities is evident throughout the day. They are skilled at initiating their own play and have many opportunities to make independent decisions. For example, they role play being a hairdresser, construct models using a wide range of

resources, access computer programs and choose to look at books. They are equally keen to participate in adult-led activities which they know are going to be fun, for example, the regular, lively singing sessions. Children are very independent and relish opportunities to take additional responsibility, such as helping to prepare snack or pour their own drinks.

Throughout the day children engage in lively conversation with each other and with adults. Their thinking is challenged and their learning supported through the very sensitive interaction of the highly skilled staff team. For example, they try out new words as they are encouraged to describe how the play dough feels as they squeeze it through their fingers.

Children make particularly good progress in developing their communication, language, literacy and numeracy skills. They regularly enjoy listening to stories in comfortable reading areas, both indoors and outdoors, and are extremely enthusiastic participants of the regular singing sessions. They take great delight in making up new words to familiar songs and exploring the sounds and rhymes in the words they use. Children's early attempts at mark making are highly valued as they sign themselves in on arrival or create their own labels for displays. Children confidently count and use their developing awareness of number to help them solve practical problems. For example, they work out how many places to set at the snack table by counting the chairs and finding a corresponding number of plates. Children use technology confidently as they independently access the computer. They are adept at manipulating the mouse to access and use a wide range of programs that support their learning in other areas. Children's enthusiasm for learning ensures they are developing excellent skills for the future.

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

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|--|---|
| 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

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|--|---|
| 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 | 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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|--|---|
| 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

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| 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

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