

# The Little Acorns Preschool (Chelmsford)

Inspection report for early years provision

---

<b>Unique reference number</b>	EY420651
<b>Inspection date</b>	09/12/2011
<b>Inspector</b>	Jenny Howell
<b>Setting address</b>	St. Luke's Church Hall, Gloucester Avenue, Chelmsford, ESSEX, CM2 9LG
<b>Telephone number</b>	07812 368 692
<b>Email</b>	info@littleacorns-preschool.com
<b>Type of setting</b>	Childcare - Non-Domestic

---

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](mailto: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](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://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 Pre-School is committee run and has been open since 1966, re-opened in 2011. It operates from two rooms within St Luke's church, in Moulsham, Chelmsford. A secure area is available for outdoor play. The group is open each week day during term time only. Opening hours are from 9.15am until 12.15pm and also from 1pm until 3.30pm on Mondays and Fridays. A lunch club option is also available each day.

The pre-school is registered on the Early Years Register to care for a maximum of 36 children at any one time. There are currently 52 children on roll. The pre-school supports children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language. The pre-school has been accredited by the local authority to receive free early education funding for two-year-olds.

The pre-school employs 14 members of staff to work with children. Of these, 12 hold recognised early years qualifications and one is working towards achieving this. The pre-school receives support from the local authority.

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

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

The pre-school is effective in providing an enjoyable and engaging experience for all children. As a result, children make good progress in their learning and development. Effective arrangements are in place in order to safeguard children. Good relationships with parents ensure that they are well-informed about their children. Staff also work effectively with some of the other professionals involved with children in order to ensure they can meet varying individual needs. A good system of self-evaluation is in place in order to identify strengths and weaknesses and bring about improvements.

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

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

- establish and maintain a regular two-way flow of information between providers where children also attend other settings.

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

Staff have a good understanding of safeguarding procedures and this is supported by relevant training. Staff are experienced and nearly all hold relevant qualifications. All staff have undergone checks through the Criminal Records Bureau. This supports the managers in ensuring that all staff working with children

are suitable to do so. Sufficient numbers of staff hold up-to-date training in paediatric first aid to ensure that at least one person is present at all times. A good range of written policies and practical procedures are in place to effectively support the smooth running of the pre-school. Daily routines, such as risk assessments of all areas and effective arrival and departure arrangements, help to ensure that children are safe and secure at all times.

A system of self-evaluation is in place which has been completed in consultation with all staff. They have been able to identify what the pre-school does well and the positive impact that this has upon children. Effective action has been taken to make a range of improvements. This has included securing funding to make substantial improvements to the garden area, providing an outdoor learning environment which can be used all year round.

Staff make good use of the expertise of other professionals. This includes receiving training from nurses and educational specialists in order to ensure they can provide appropriate care and learning experiences for individual children. As a result, all children are cared for in a fully inclusive environment. Good links with the local school helps children in making a confident transition into full-time education. Staff are aware when children also attend other settings. However, they have not yet developed relationships with these in order to ensure a regular exchange of relevant information.

Good relationships are developed with parents. Staff are available to talk to on a daily basis and can be contacted at any time. Parents are able to view and contribute to children's learning and development records, helping them to support their child's early education. Notice boards and regular newsletters help to keep parents informed, and their views are sought through a comments book and exit questionnaires. This feedback is acted upon in order to improve the experiences of parents and children. Parents comment that they are very happy with pre-school. They feel that staff are approachable and that their children have been helped to make good progress.

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

Children's learning and development needs are well supported by an effective and enthusiastic team of staff. They make good use of the space available to provide children with a good range of learning opportunities, both indoors and outside. Children access many resources independently and staff make it easy for them to choose others to get out. Daily routines such as snack time, ensure that children's needs are met. An effective key person system supports staff in developing an accurate picture of what individual children are able to do. This allows them to determine what stage of development individual children have reached and then use this information to plan activities which will help them make good progress towards the early learning goals. Plans cover all areas of learning and are based on the learning needs of individual children, as well as responding to their ideas and interests.

Children enjoy learning through play and settle quickly as they arrive at the start of each session. Children enjoy interacting with their friends and with staff, which helps them to learn both independently and through observing and talking to others. Children express their imaginations as they paint, cut, stick and draw, with free access to a range of craft materials. They enjoy dressing-up and, for example, turn the climbing frame into a pirate ship. Children explore the world around them as they learn how to care for pets, or visit a local children's farm for their summer trip. They also grow plants and talk about where food comes from. Playing with play dough, sand and water helps children to explore and learn about the properties of different materials.

Children have good opportunities to develop skills for the future. They have free access to books and puppets, helping them to develop early reading skills and to develop their confidence in communicating with others and widening their vocabulary. Children develop good counting skills as they find out how many candles there are on the birthday cake or decide how many grape pieces to take at snack time. They solve problems, both alone and working as a team, for example, to work out how to make the train track join up with a bridge. Children develop confidence in using computers through regular visits to use the information and communication technology suite at the local primary school.

Children behave well and happily follow reminders and instructions from staff. They show respect and concern towards their friends, listening to them and taking pleasure in their achievements. Staff make good use of praise and stickers to instantly reward positive behaviour. Children learn to appreciate similarities and differences. They find out about different world festivals, such as Diwali and Hanukah and also learn about people's varying needs, for example, through visits from a guide-dog in training.

Children learn how to keep themselves safe. They enjoy visits from police officers to talk about stranger danger and the fire brigade to find out about fire safety. Children learn how to evacuate the building safely in the event of an emergency and they practise and act out how to cross roads safely in their outdoor area. This is further reinforced through walks around the local area, such as to the library.

Children have good opportunities to learn how to keep themselves healthy. They are beginning to remember to wash their hands after using the toilet and are also able to manage their own energy levels as they choose to exercise outdoors, or sit and rest on cushions indoors. Children enjoy a good range of healthy snacks, with a daily fruit or vegetable option. They are also able to help themselves to fresh drinking water at any time. Children develop a variety of physical skills through using a range of equipment available including balls, parachute, tricycles, climbing frame and balancing beams.

## 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

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

### 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

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

