

Little Acorns Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector	Sandra Croker
Setting address	Langley Community Infant School, Pendeen Crescent, Plymouth, Devon, PL6 6QS
Telephone number	01752 204082
Email	
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*.

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Description of the setting

Little Acorns Pre-school opened in 1982. It operates from a classroom in the grounds of Oakwood Primary School, in a residential area approximately five miles from Plymouth city centre. Little Acorns Pre-school has two playrooms, a kitchen, toilets and an enclosed outdoor play area. The pre-school also has use of the school gym and playground. Children attend from the surrounding area. Little Acorns Pre-school is registered on the Early Years Register. There are currently 29 children from three to four years on roll. The pre-school provides funded early education for three- and four-year-olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions. Little Acorns Pre-school supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language. It is open Monday to Friday during school terms, from 8.55am until 11.25am and 12.35pm until 3.05pm. Children attend lunch club from 11.30am until 12.30pm. There are six staff employed to work with the children; of these, one has an early years qualification at level 2, four have early years qualifications at level 3 and one has an early years qualification at level 4 or above. 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.

Children make good progress because the pre-school is inclusive, well structured and an overall thought-provoking play environment. Children's safety and welfare are well protected as staff implement secure procedures and supervise children consistently. The staff team work well together and show a good commitment to continuous improvement through training. They routinely reflect on their practice, identifying areas of strengths and those for future development. Strong relationships have been established with parents, other early year practitioners and professionals.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- enhance the use of visual signs, symbols, notices, numbers and words in the outdoor environment to support children to begin to read and write

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Provision for safeguarding children's welfare is good. Staff are knowledgeable about child protection issues and are confident about the procedures for reporting concerns. The pre-school has comprehensive policies and procedures which point out the steps staff take to safeguard children, and staff are confident in their knowledge of these. Robust systems are in place for recruiting and checking the suitability of new staff. Risk assessments are clear and relevant to the pre-school. The premises are secure and visitors are closely monitored.

The pre-school offers an environment that reflects cultural and social diversity and is welcoming for parents and children. Words from other cultures are displayed and children take part in celebrations which thoughtfully promote other traditions and cultures. Staff make regular observations and assessments of each child and provide effective activities to promote their individual progress and development. Staff interact constantly with children, talking about their home and family, valuing their uniqueness and helping the children feel secure and included.

The pre-school is well organised, allowing children to move around with comfort. There are areas for quiet activities, and a good range of resources for children to choose from. The pre-school school uses a self-evaluation system to identify strengths and areas for improvement in order to continue to raise standards.

Staff are very welcoming and informally share information with parents each day, through individual learning records and at review meetings. Regular newsletters inform the parents of events and activities. Staff take time to talk with parents about children's experiences at home and at pre-school. There is an effective communication book sent home each day. Policies and procedures are responsibly shared and additional information is clearly available on the notice board. The pre-school has established good partnerships with other professionals and the school it serves.

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

Children's understanding of safety issues is demonstrated through their play, as they take turns to balance on the beam outside. Children show that they feel safe. They confidently tell staff if they hurt themselves, need to go to the toilet or want more to drink.

Staff plan learning opportunities based around themes and children's interests, but encourage children to make their own choices at each session. There is a key person for each child attending. Staff undertake regular spontaneous and focussed

observations which reflect the children's progress and achievements. Plans follow the direction that children wish to take, thereby sustaining their interest and promoting their confidence and creative ideas.

Children are confident and show good levels of self-esteem. They build strong relationships with each other as they competently help each other to put on costumes in role play. They discuss that only the fairy can fly because fairies have wings. Children successfully understand the need to cooperate. They use their initiative as they fill different containers with damp sand and pretend to make cakes. Children collaborate and cooperate well as they use a selection of different paints and willingly pass paintbrushes to share the colours. They show curiosity as they mix colours and keenly compare colours they create. Children confidently use painting programmes on the computer, effectively moving the mouse to colour pictures on the screen. Staff intervene at appropriate times to thoughtfully extend children's learning.

Children's behaviour is very good. They tidy toys away willingly, showing a good awareness of responsibility. They respond well to routine tasks such as lining up for the toilet, sitting as a group or collecting their coats for outdoor play. Children are confident and very inspired by the learning environment around them. They have a strong interest in the resources and activities in the pre-school. However, there are not enough visual signs, symbols, notices, numbers and words in the outdoor environment to fully support children who are beginning to read and write

Children develop good skills for their future learning. They are confident speakers as staff engage them in conversation throughout the day. Each child is given the opportunity to share books with staff which they then enthusiastically take home. Children enjoy music sessions, excitedly dancing to the rhythms and willingly singing the songs. Staff develop children's rhyming skills as they recite poems and ask children to call out the words that rhyme. Children think of other rhyming words to extend their vocabulary. Children engage freely in early mark making tasks. Staff effectively support and encourage learning and independence, and focus on enhancing opportunities to link letters with sounds. Children talk about shapes and count as they make 'fruit faces', using scissors and glue sticks independently. Children use mathematical concepts outside by throwing bean bags into hoops marked with numbers. Staff thoughtfully give children chalks to practise tracing over numbers and encourage them to draw their own numbers on the playground. Children develop a wonder of nature as they help to grow plants in the outside area. They play creatively in the outside role play garden centre. Children demonstrate a good understanding of the outside world. Staff foster this by taking children to the shops near to the pre-school. Children learn about the wider world as they eagerly engage in activities to celebrate the Hindu festival of Diwali. Children's differing lifestyles are promoted well through books, dressing-up costumes, puzzles and toys. Staff learn words to support children who speak English as an additional language.

Children's good health is promoted well through effective hygiene routines. Children demonstrate good knowledge of the importance of hand washing through discussion and practice, and know why the tables are cleaned before their snack is served. They eagerly explain that the nurse came to tell them how to wash their

hands. Children have a good understanding of healthy eating. They eat nutritious snacks and staff and parents work closely to ensure that the contents of the children's lunch boxes are healthy. Children engage in a wide range of physical activities, both indoors and out; for example, they move to music inside, balance on the wooden beam outside or ride on wheeled toys. They are increasing their understanding about the importance of regular exercise as part of maintaining a healthy lifestyle. They know that their heart beats faster and that they get hot when they run around. They know this is good for them.

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	2

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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