

# Little Acorns

Inspection report for early years provision

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**Unique reference number** EY438010  
**Inspection date** 26/04/2012  
**Inspector** Pauline Pinnegar

**Setting address** Hurworth Primary School, Westfield Drive, Hurworth,  
DARLINGTON, County Durham, DL2 2ET

**Telephone number** 07896318103

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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 was registered in October 2011 and is owned by a private provider. The nursery is situated in the rural village of Hurworth, within Hurworth Primary School. Children are cared for in two main activity rooms. The premises are easily accessible and there is a fully enclosed area for outdoor play. The setting supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language. Children attend for a variety of sessions and come from the local and surrounding areas.

The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register and on both the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. The nursery is registered for a maximum of 30 children under eight years at any one time. There are currently 59 children on roll within the Early Years Foundation Stage. The nursery opens every weekday during school term time. Opening times are from 8am until 6pm. The nursery is also open for holiday club Monday to Wednesday from 8am to 6pm but has four weeks of full closure within the school holidays. Children are able to receive funding for nursery education.

There are nine members of staff employed in the nursery; most staff have appropriate early years qualifications. Two members of staff have qualified teacher status, one of whom also has Early Years Professional Status, one member of staff has a Level 4 qualification and is working towards level 5. Five further members of staff have a relevant level 3 qualification and the final staff member is working towards a level 3 childcare qualification. The nursery receives support from the local authority.

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

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children are very happy and settled because staff take great care to ensure they have all the relevant details required to respond well to their individual needs. This also ensures they make good progress in their learning and development in an inclusive environment. Effective partnerships are in place between parents, providers and other agencies which mean children receive a holistic approach to their individual care. Parents have a wide range of opportunities to be involved in the life of the nursery and staff strive hard to help them to continue learning at home. The environment has been designed to ensure that children have a challenging and stimulating experience and their safety is paramount. Systems to monitor and evaluate the setting's performance are efficient and have identified the need for further development of the outdoor area. This demonstrates commitment to improving their service to children and maintaining improvements.

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

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

- develop the outdoor environment to offer children further opportunities to explore, use their senses, and be physically active and exuberant.

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

Children's safety is of paramount importance and key staff have attended training in safeguarding. A detailed policy is in place and staff are clear who to report concerns to so that children are always well protected. Comprehensive risk assessments are in place for indoors, outside and outings. Access to the building is secure with an electronic 'Fob' system in place. Staff are deployed effectively to ensure children are properly supervised at all times and good contingency arrangements are in place to cover staff absences in an emergency. Detailed policies and procedures are successfully implemented which underpin and promote children's welfare

Senior management and staff have worked well together to create a colourful and challenging environment where children engaging with innovative activities, such as using the touch screen computer and the electronic white board, learn through play and have fun. There are good systems in place to support children with special educational needs which means all children feel valued and their uniqueness is promoted. All staff demonstrate a commitment to working with external agencies to support the inclusion of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Children benefit from the strong leadership and management who have high aspirations and a clear vision to provide good quality care and education to all children who attend. Effective systems to monitor and evaluate the setting take account of staff, parents' and children's views and the information is used to improve and develop policies, practice and procedures. A questionnaire is sent out to parents at least annually asking for their views about nursery. The responses from these are then analysed by the senior management team and any issues raised are acted upon as necessary. This information also feeds into the annual action plan when appropriate.

The effective key person system enables staff to establish close working relationships with parents from the onset, in order to secure continuity of children's care. Effective procedures have been established to work with parents and as a result, parents speak highly of the care and learning their children receive. They describe the setting as 'excellent' and say 'the nursery provides outstanding care'. An informative parent's pack, along with displays of important information, means that parents are well informed about the setting from the start. They are kept up to date about their child's learning through daily verbal feedback and photographic displays, newsletters and written activity planning. Specific parent consultation times also take place during the year, when parents are invited in to the setting to formally share their child's progress in nursery and at home. Parents are made to feel involved in the setting are able to share and contribute to children's written developmental records. They also make good use of the 'wow moments' documents to record children's achievements and interests at home. The

partnerships with schools that children move onto means that transition process is smooth. Information sharing is effectively conducted.

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

Staff are very enthusiastic and there are effective systems in place to ensure children's learning is an individual journey. Observations are frequent and detailed and are used effectively to inform future planning so that no child is ever disadvantaged. This results in every child attending making good progress according to their starting points and capabilities during their time at the nursery. Staff use lots of praise to let children know they are valued and are models of good behaviour which means children readily respond to gentle reminders about behaving well. Children's effort and achievement is acknowledged and praised, star charts are used as positive reinforcement. As a result, children develop good social skills and a sense of self-worth. Children enter the nursery confidently at the start of the session and demonstrate clearly they are very much at home and comfortable within the setting. They self-register and straight away engage in activities prepared for them, either with their friends, or on their own. Enjoyment is clearly evident and they have established strong and trusting relationships with all the adults in the setting. Staff build on children's ideas to extend play. For example, children show great interest in letter writing. This activity was extended with a trip to the local post office to buy stamps and post their letters to parents. As a follow up to this a parent also posted a letter to the nursery and attached photographs relating to the 'journey' the letter followed. Staff offer children good explanations and further challenge their thinking by asking open-ended questions. This helps to promote their learning effectively.

During free play children are able to access resources independently, for instance, mark-making materials are freely available on tables and in role play areas and children thoroughly enjoy making lists using clip boards and pens. The environment is rich in print, such as signs and labels, so children can learn about words. Children are beginning to form recognisable letters as they write their name on their art work. They enjoy daily opportunities to be creative with art and craft resources such as drawing, painting and sticking. They explore colour and begin to differentiate between colours, for example, one child shows his drawing and is keen to demonstrate he knows the colours by naming them all. They can categorise objects according to shape and size, as they sort and match different sized figures and line them up in order of size. Children enjoy exploring aspects of floating, sinking and capacity with buckets of water outdoors and exploring how fast objects flow using piping outdoors. Children express their thoughts, ideas and feelings in a variety of ways. For instance, through role play and music sessions. Children explore rhythm and sounds as they have fun with the musical instruments they have made themselves. They love to play in the 'flower shop' and have fun dressing up. They love to snuggle together in the den's they have made outdoors and they listen to their favourite stories. Children learn about the wider world and investigate tadpoles and mini beasts and show great fascination looking at the diggers in the construction site within the nursery car park. As a result children

show a great interest in construction and like to build with a purpose. Children are making good progress as a result of these activities and the effective support they receive from adults.

Children enjoy a variety of experiences that promote a healthy lifestyle. For example, there are lots of resources such as scissors, rolling pins and cutters to support their small-hand movements. The imaginative use of a free-flow system ensures children have lots of outdoor play. Children have grown plants and beans in the outdoors area and most areas of learning are also covered outdoors. Children play on the field and have regular visits from a football coach. However, the outdoor area is planned for further development and currently does not fully promote opportunities for children to use their senses, and be physically active and exuberant. Children enjoy healthy eating activities, such as tasting a variety of fruit and have fun making their own 'soup' with a variety of fruit and vegetables. Snacks provided are varied and nutritious. Children are developing a good understanding of safety as they take part in fire drills and regularly discuss the emergency services. Gentle reminders from staff, for example, to walk carefully outdoors on visits, encourage children to learn how to keep themselves safe. Children have clearly developed close relationships with the staff and their peers. For example, they search out their friends to play and go independently to staff for cuddles and support. This helps to promote their sense of belonging and ensures children feel secure at the setting.

## 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

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### 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

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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