

Little Acorns

Village Hall, Holcot Road, Brixworth, NORTHAMPTON, NN6 9BS

Inspection date	28/11/2012
Previous inspection date	06/07/2009

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	
	Previous inspection:	
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		1
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		1
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		1

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision is outstanding

- Children are happy, motivated and eager to learn. They show high levels of independence, curiosity and imagination and demonstrate extremely positive behaviour and strong self-assurance.
- Children's individual needs are exceptionally well met because of the effectiveness of the key person support and the commitment of the whole staff team.
- Excellent quality teaching is rooted in a very secure knowledge and understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Each practitioner has a strong awareness of how young children learn and they make the most of every opportunity to promote children's learning. As a result, children make outstanding progress taking into account their starting points and capabilities.
- Children's language development is given a very high priority. Children with English as an additional language are particularly well supported. Language delay is recognised early and effectively supported, with the involvement of families and other professionals.
- The pre-school premises are safe, well-equipped and welcoming, both inside and outdoors, providing children with easily accessible resources that promote learning and challenge them.

Information about this inspection

Inspections of registered early years provision are scheduled:

- at least once in every inspection cycle. The current cycle ends on 31 July 2016
- more frequently where Ofsted identifies a need to do so, for example where provision was previously judged as inadequate
- brought forward in the inspection cycle where Ofsted has received information that suggests the provision may not be meeting the legal requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage; or where assessment of the provision identifies a need for early inspection
- prioritised for inspection where we have received information that the provision is not meeting the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and which suggests children may not be safe
- at the completion of an investigation into failure to comply with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Inspection activities

- The inspector was provided with a tour of the premises.
- The inspector made observations throughout the inspection, covering all aspects of the setting.
- The inspector looked at a sample range of documentation including records, policies, procedures and self-evaluation.
- Observations and/or discussions took place with the registered providers and staff.

Inspector

Anne Archer

Full Report

Information about the setting

Little Acorns was registered in 2009 on the Early Years Register. It operates as a pre-school from the village hall in the Northamptonshire village of Brixworth. Children are cared for in the small hall and the large hall and they have use of an enclosed outdoor play area at the rear of the building.

Little Acorns has 47 children on roll aged between two years and under five years. The pre-school provides funded early education for three- and four-year-olds and supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language and children with special

educational needs and/or disabilities.

Little Acorns is open during school term times between 9.15am and 3.15pm on Mondays, Tuesdays and Fridays, between 9.15am and 1pm on Wednesdays and between 9.15am and 12.15pm on Thursdays. Children attend for a variety of sessions.

The pre-school is privately owned and employs 10 qualified members of childcare staff. These include a member of staff with Early Years Professional Status and two staff with qualifications at level 4.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

To further improve the quality of the early years provision the provider should:

- consider ways to enhance the outdoor provision further, for example, by introducing more sensory experiences, to extend children's learning of the natural world.

Inspection judgements

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend

Children's enthusiasm for learning is matched by practitioner's high expectations of themselves and of the children. There are rich, varied and imaginative experiences for children to access for themselves and also opportunities for them to work with an adult and a small group of children. Excellent quality teaching is highly focussed and effective, ensuring that children receive the experiences needed to make rapid progress across all areas of learning. It also means that they are extremely well prepared for the next stage in their learning, whether it is to nursery or reception class.

Each child is secure in communicating their needs and preferences. This is supported by visual aids, use of children's home language to support their learning of English and by the use of signing, this is in addition to promoting children's language skills. Children are very secure in expressing themselves. Children develop their language skills, as they are skilfully encouraged to repeat vocabulary introduced to them by practitioners, such as 'squelchy' and 'smooth', while they mix, then knead the salt dough. Practitioners are skilled at making sure all children are included and so children work harmoniously together. Questions are carefully framed to encourage children to anticipate and consider what might happen next to the mixture as they discuss and experience, texture, shape and the size of the dough. Practitioners weave questions seamlessly into conversation to ensure that all areas of learning are covered from planned activities. This ensures each

child's individual learning needs are encompassed effectively to enable children to make excellent progress in their learning and development.

Practitioners work very closely with parents to assess children's starting points and capabilities on entry, so that they can establish some initial targets, linked to the Early Years Foundation Stage. Parents receive periodic reports and are invited to stay and play sessions and consultation meetings. This means that they are fully included in setting children's individual targets for learning and are helped to understand how to actively support their children's learning at home.

Children's progress towards the early learning goals in the seven areas of learning is extremely effectively tracked, and is monitored by the registered provider to ensure that no particular group of children is falling behind expectations. The organisation of planning and practitioners superb knowledge of their key children's learning needs means that every opportunity to question and challenge children's thinking is skilfully taken. For example, during an outdoor activity using foam tubes to create different sounds, a child starts to talk about the size of the tubes. The practitioner immediately starts to incorporate mathematical language into the activity. Later, children go on to try to balance the tubes on the ground, although, as one child points out, 'It is difficult because of the wind'.

The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children

High staff to child ratios and the successful implementation of the key person system ensure that all children form secure, emotional attachments. This provides a very strong base for all children to develop skills for their learning. Children show an extremely strong sense of belonging and display high levels of confidence and self-esteem. For example, a child with older siblings who has attended the pre-school previously, attends a session alone for the first time. The child looks round the room to choose an activity to join in and responds positively to the other children and to the practitioner, showing that the child feels safe and secure.

Children develop excellent self-care skills, for example, as they collect a bowl and fill it with their chosen cereal, take it to the table, sit down and pour milk over it so it is ready to eat. They are secure in their understanding of health practices and rarely need reminding to wash their hands before choosing their snack.

Children's understanding of safety is extremely well developed. They experience exciting visits to the fire station and receive visits from police officers who talk to them about keeping themselves safe. Children look at photographs in their learning journal and are able to recall the visits and what they learnt. Children also learn about assessing risk for themselves as they try to walk across the climbing bridge without support.

Children and practitioners go on many walks in the village to become more familiar with their local community. They visit the pocket park and the country park where they might have a teddy bears picnic or enjoy a forest school. Children can access the outdoor play

area on request, the rented building not lending itself to free-flow access. They can access a full range of activities when playing outside as well as participating in games and using equipment to support their physical development and good health, such as throwing bean bags into a hoop or swinging the hoop around their hips.

Partnerships with other early years providers are established and information is shared to support children's continuity of learning. To support their transition, children visit the village school to become familiar with it before they join the reception class.

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

The owners of the pre-school set high aspirations for quality. Their accurate identification of priorities through self-evaluation and implementing these, produces continued improvement to the quality of the provision. For example, the joint owner has produced her own documents to track and monitor children's progress, which have been shared with other local providers and are proving successful for everyone. The setting is currently exploring ways to enhance the outdoor provision even further, as there is scope to introduce more sensory experiences for children in order to extend their understanding of the world.

Robust recruitment practices ensure a strong, motivated staff team who work together exceptionally well. Performance management through staff meetings and appraisals, including peer-on-peer observations ensure that strengths and good practice are highlighted and celebrated and areas for development are worked on through peer role modelling or through training.

Partnerships with parents are highly effective. Parents say they feel very involved in their children's learning and appreciate the support and advice they receive from practitioners, to enable them to help their children at home. Their views, and those of their children, are sought regularly in a variety of ways and used by practitioners when reviewing their provision. Partnerships with other professionals involved in the children's lives, such as speech therapists, are constructive and valued by both sides.

Children's safety is a priority for everyone working at the pre-school. Risk assessments are conducted and reviewed on all aspects of the provision. Safeguarding and their role and responsibilities relating to it, are fully understood by all practitioners. They attend regular refresher training and policies and procedures have been updated recently to reflect changes in the requirements. For example, mobile phones and cameras are safely stored away from the children's play areas during sessions.

What inspection judgements mean

Registered early years provision

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	Outstanding provision is highly effective in meeting the needs of all children exceptionally well. This ensures that children are very well prepared for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 2	Good	Good provision is effective in delivering provision that meets the needs of all children well. This ensures children are ready for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	Satisfactory provision is performing less well than expectations in one or more of the key areas. It requires improvement in order to be good.
Grade 4	Inadequate	Provision that is inadequate requires significant improvement and/or enforcement. The provision is failing to give children an acceptable standard of early years education and/or is not meeting the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be inspected again within 12 months of the date of this inspection.
Met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider continues to meet the requirements for registration.
Not Met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider does not meet the requirements for registration.

Inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of provision that is registered on the Early Years Register. The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and care, known as the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Setting details

Unique reference number

EY389345

Local authority

Northamptonshire

Inspection number

821749

Type of provision

Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	2 - 5
Total number of places	35
Number of children on roll	47
Name of provider	Little Acorns
Date of previous inspection	06/07/2009
Telephone number	07534426594

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Type of provision

For the purposes of this inspection the following definitions apply:

Full-time provision is that which operates for more than three hours. These are usually known as nurseries, nursery schools and pre-schools and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the higher fee for registration.

Sessional provision operates for more than two hours but does not exceed three hours in any one day. These are usually known as pre-schools, kindergartens or nursery schools and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the lower fee for registration.

Childminders care for one or more children where individual children attend for a period of more than two hours in any one day. They operate from domestic premises that are usually their own home. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Out of school provision may be sessional or full-time provision and is delivered before or after school and/or in the summer holidays. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. Where children receive their Early Years Foundation Stage in school these providers do not have to deliver the learning and development requirements in full but should complement the experiences children receive in school.

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