

Little Acorns

99 Church Road, Urmston, Manchester, Lancashire, M41 9FJ

Inspection date	10/12/2012
Previous inspection date	10/11/2010

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	3
	Previous inspection:	2
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		3
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		3
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		3

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision is satisfactory

- Children move freely within a stimulating learning environment and choose which toys they would like to play with, which promotes their independent learning.
- Children enjoy their time at the nursery, they have lots of opportunities to be creative and benefit from daily singing time, which helps promote their listening skills and language development.
- Children are learning the importance of good behaviour, pre-school children understand they must share and take turns. Staff are positive role models who encourage children to show care and concern for one another.

It is not yet good because

- There have been a lot of staff changes, this means some children are unable to form a secure attachment with a consistent member of staff.
- Staff do not always have a clear understanding of what children can do or need help with. This means the activities provided do not always encourage children to make as much progress as they could.
- Staff do not provide enough opportunities for parents to share what they know about their child's learning and development during their time at nursery.
- Plans to improve the quality of the nursery are not yet fully implemented, particularly ways to monitor observation, planning and assessment of children's learning.

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.

The provision is also registered on the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. This report includes a judgment about compliance with the requirements of that register.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed activities in each of the children's play rooms and the outdoor area.
The inspector held meetings with the manager and the company's childcare consultant, the inspector also spoke to staff within the nursery at appropriate times throughout the inspection.
- The inspector looked at children's assessment records, planning documentation, evidence of suitability of practitioners working within the setting, the provider's action plans and a range of other documentation.
- The inspector also took account of the views of parents and carers spoken to on the day.

Inspector

Vickie Halliwell

Full Report

Information about the setting

Little Acorns was registered in 2006 on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. It is one of ten nurseries owned by Little Acorns group limited. The nursery operates from four rooms on two floors of a large Victorian House, in the Urmston area of Trafford, Manchester. The nursery serves the local area and is accessible to all children. There is a fully enclosed area available for outdoor play.

The nursery employs 17 members of child care staff. Of these, 14 hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3. The nursery opens Monday to Friday all year round. Sessions are from 7.30am until 6pm. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 75 children attending who are within the early years age group. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. It supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language and children with special needs and/or disabilities.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

To meet the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage the provider must:

- improve the key person system to ensure that every child's care and learning is tailored to meet their individual needs
- use assessment as an integral part of identifying children's learning priorities, both on entry and ongoing, in order to shape and deliver challenging learning experiences to help children make good progress in all aspects of their learning and development.

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

- extend the engagement with parents by encouraging them to contribute more to initial and ongoing assessments of their child's capabilities, sharing information about their child's progress and how they can further promote learning and development at home
- extend systems for monitoring performance and implement an effective programme of professional development to improve knowledge, understanding and practice.

Inspection judgements

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

Children benefit from a wide range of play materials and activities that are continuously available to them. Children move purposefully within their individual rooms and demonstrate some of the characteristics of effective learning. For example, independently accessing activities and resources that interest them. Pre-school children seek out friends to share experiences, suggesting that a friend joins in with a role play activity in the home corner. The children play cooperatively, agreeing who will be the mummy and become absorbed in their play. The daily routine includes experiences which satisfactorily promote children's progress towards the early learning goals. Most children enjoy daily stories, which stimulate their interest in books and the written word. Pre-school children understand that print carries meaning and find their own names on arrival. Children have continuous opportunities to express themselves through creative play. They enjoy painting, collage and moving to music which helps children express their own thoughts and ideas. Babies explore and investigate a wide range of different textures, including wooden and natural items. However, weaknesses in assessment and the key person system mean staff do not have a secure knowledge of individual children's capabilities. Consequently, they are unable plan sufficiently for the next steps in children's learning. As a result, staff fail to deliver challenging learning experiences, which ensure children make as much progress as they can in all aspects of their learning and development.

Opportunities for parents to share details of their child's learning and development when they start nursery are limited. Staff provide some general feedback for parents about their child's achievements and listen to what parents say about their child's interests at home. However, opportunities for parents to contribute fully to their child's continued learning and development are limited. The quality of teaching is varied, some skilled staff demonstrate a sound understanding of how children learn and provide a good range of activities and experiences. These staff respond skilfully and instinctively to challenge children and extend their learning. For example, whilst playing with the dough staff introduce the concept of shape and size to two-year-old children. They ask open questions which encourage children to talk about what they have made. Children are encouraged to pinch, squeeze and roll the dough between their fingers, this helps them develop the muscles skills they need to hold small tools, such as, pencils in the future. However, at times, staff fail to fully engage children's interests or match activities to children's individual learning needs. Consequently, during routine group story time, several two-year-old children lose interest, turning away to play with their own or the slippers of other children, and others begin to search through a nearby toy box to find something to play with. Routine procedures, such as, nappy changing also impact on children's enjoyment, as children who are interested miss parts of the story when they are taken to have their nappy changed.

Within the pre-school room, some group games are abandoned by children who lose interest. Staff initially invite the children to play, but continuously leave the game asking children to wait for their return. The game is further disrupted when at the request of other children the member of staff leading the game stops to make paper fans. Children

eventually leave the table without playing the game. In contrast, the children enjoy a well-planned outing which raises their awareness of the local community. Staff provide clear explanations about road safety and encourage children to find signs and numerals. Staff compile a photographic record of the outing which children refer to when explaining what they saw to the inspector.

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

Children are happy and settled within the nursery. Familiar surroundings, consistent routines and some familiar staff help children feel emotionally secure. Babies benefit from a consistent staff team which helps them form appropriate bonds and attachments. However, significant staff changes within the nursery have impacted on the effectiveness of the key person system for children over two years. Staff routinely provide loving and affectionate care and children are warmly welcomed when they arrive at the nursery. The caring nature of the staff team, who appropriately meet children's immediate care needs helps foster children's emotional wellbeing. However, many children have been allocated a new key person so do not have a secure attachment to them, which limits children's emotional wellbeing.

Self-help skills are particularly well promoted. Pre-school children routinely put on and remove their own coats and shoes before and after outdoor play. Children are provided with a varied range of freshly prepared meals and snacks. Staff are knowledgeable about individual dietary requirements and work closely with the cook, who provide alternative meals. Water is continuously available and pre-school children recognise when they are thirsty and confidently dispense their own water. Children aged over one year have daily opportunities to be physically active and play outdoors. Pre-school children confidently explore the outdoor play area, they enjoy running freely and use a selection of outdoor toys which help them practice and refine new skills. For example, learning to pedal tricycles and steering with increasing control as they follow 'road markings' on the floor.

Children are valued as individuals and are learning to respect and value differences, which helps them develop a positive and caring attitude towards others. Resources which reflect positive images of race, culture, gender and disability are evident throughout the setting. Children are becoming increasingly aware of the importance of socially acceptable behaviour. Staff are positive role models who encourage children to take turn and share as they play. Consequently, pre-school children are developing a strong understanding of right and wrong and some independently resolve minor disputes explaining the importance of sharing to one another. Children are learning how they can keep themselves safe. For example, before taking children out into the community staff explain the importance of holding hands and road safety. Within the setting children are reminded they must wait for a member of staff to switch the electrical socket on, before they can play on the computer. Pre-school children are well prepared for their transition into school. Simple routines, for example, lining up to go outside, sitting and listening to stories, learning to share play materials and managing their own personal hygiene, helps ensure children are well prepared socially and emotionally for school.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years

provision

The nursery have recently experienced a very high staff turnover, including a new manager and deputy manager. Senior management within the company have recognised the challenges facing the newly appointed management team. Consequently, a knowledgeable childcare consultant is working with the setting to provide support, tackle under performance and improve practice. Steps have been taken to minimise further disruption and the nursery has a number of regular supply staff. This helps provide some consistency while additional permanent staff are recruited. Recent self-evaluation is accurate and informs challenging action plans to address identified weaknesses. Sound progress has been made within a relatively short timescale and management are clear about future priorities for improvement. Recruitment and vetting procedures are secure. Recently revised systems ensure staff benefit from a comprehensive induction process and routine staff appraisals and supervision meetings.

Children are effectively safeguarded. Staff have a secure knowledge and understanding of safeguarding issues and the procedures to follow to protect a child from possible harm. Routine safety checks help keep children safe within the setting and required staff to child ratios are maintained. The manager spends time within the children's rooms, monitoring the range of play materials and activities provided. However, systems to monitor how well staff monitor and assess children's progress and plan for their future learning are not robust enough. Consequently, the practice of individual staff is varied and some staff are unable to securely identify how well children are progressing towards the early learning goal. This impacts on the provision for children's future learning.

Mutually respectful relationships are evident between parents and practitioners. Parents are well informed about staff changes within the nursery and are advised when their child is appointed a new key person. Parents spoken to during the inspection are happy with the care their children receive. Staff encourage parents to share what they know about their child at admission, although much of the information requested focuses on children's care needs and routines. The nursery works appropriately with external agencies, for example, speech therapists to ensure identified children get the support they need to help them make progress.

The Childcare Register

The requirements for the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are **Met**

The requirements for the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are **Met**

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	EY318335
Local authority	Trafford
Inspection number	891953
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 17

Total number of places	71
Number of children on roll	75
Name of provider	Little Acorns Group Limited
Date of previous inspection	10/11/2010
Telephone number	0161 748 0963

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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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