

Little Acorns Day Nursery

c/o ASDA Distribution Centre, Staithes Road, Pattison Industrial Estate, District 8, Tyne and Wear, NE38 8NW

Inspection date	03/01/2013
Previous inspection date	27/04/2010

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

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision is good

- Safeguarding children's welfare is given high priority. All staff are knowledgeable about child protection issues and the premises are safe. The management team ensure that all staff fully understand how to keep children safe and follow all necessary guidelines.
- Effective leadership means that all staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities. They are well supported in their professional development and are constantly looking at ways to improve the quality of their teaching and children's learning. As a result, children are making good progress.
- Children are happy, well-motivated and keen to learn. Transitions between nursery rooms are well managed. Consequently, children show good levels of independence and have good relationships with each other and members of staff.
- The relationships formed with parents and carers are good. Consistent staffing and a good key person system ensures children receive positive and ongoing support. This results in children feeling safe and secure and behaving well.

It is not yet outstanding because

- Children are not always able to access outdoors independently and planning for outdoors does not always help children to explore things closely through a variety of means.
- The organisation of snack time for two-year-olds does not always enable them to eat and drink comfortably.

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 held discussions with the manager at the beginning of the inspection and throughout the day.
 - The inspector observed activities in the four base rooms and in the garden area and spoke to staff and children.
 - The inspector held discussions with parents and obtained their comments from parental questionnaires the nursery had carried out.
 - The inspector conducted a joint observation with the manager.
 - The inspector held discussions with the nursery's early years consultant throughout the inspection.
- The inspector sampled children's assessment records and planning documentation,
- checked evidence of suitability and qualifications of practitioners working with children and looked at the nursery's self-evaluation form and some written policies.

Inspector

Karen Tervit

Full Report

Information about the setting

Little Acorns Day Nursery was registered in 1998 on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. It is situated in purpose built premises on the ASDA warehouse site in Washington and is one of nine provisions managed by a private company. The nursery serves the local area and is accessible to all children. It operates from four base rooms and there is a fully enclosed area available for outdoor play.

The nursery employs 24 members of childcare staff. Of these, 23 hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 or above and one has an early years qualification at level 2.

The nursery opens from Monday to Friday, all year round. Sessions are from 7.30am until 6pm. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 110 children attending who are in 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.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- develop the planning for outdoors so that children who learn best outdoors can access this area whenever they want, and extend the opportunities for children to independently observe and explore things closely through a variety of means, including magnifiers and photographs
- develop the organisation of snack time so that two-year-old children can eat and drink comfortably.

Inspection judgements

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

Staff have a good understanding of the seven areas of learning and have implemented systems for observation, assessment and planning. Children's developmental journeys and tracking systems show how children are making good progress towards the early learning goals and developing the necessary skills in readiness for school. Observations of children's interests and progress are used to plan challenging, personalised learning experiences for them. The next steps in children's learning are clearly highlighted for staff to follow when planning further activities for their key children.

Staff show great interest in what children are doing, and notice and praise their achievements. This encouragement motivates children to persevere. Staff talk with the children about what they are doing and ask questions to help them make links in their learning. For example, when two-year-children build with the large, plastic bricks staff ask them to 'think which brick' and 'what colour' they need next, as well as introducing mathematical language about size and shape. Pre-school children are beginning to recognise their own name as they self-register and choose their own name and photograph in the morning. All children are developing a love of books. Babies explore favourite board books while two-year-olds and pre-school children enthusiastically join in with actions to their favourite story, often successfully predicting what comes next and creating colourful displays of their own 'bear hunt'.

Babies delight in exploring a variety of materials, such as paint, glue, water, sensory lights and treasure baskets. They develop good social skills as they mix with older babies at different times throughout the day. All children receive good opportunities to make marks. For example, they paint indoors and outdoors and use different vehicles in wet and dry sand. Children enjoy a good balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities based upon their individual interests. For example, older babies who are particularly interested in buses create their own red bus display and enthusiastically join in with the actions to 'The wheels on the bus' song. All children have daily opportunities to play outdoors. Although staff mostly plan for an exciting and challenging outdoor environment, there is scope to improve the opportunities for children to independently access outdoors whenever they want and explore things more closely, for example through access to resources including magnifiers and photographs. Children develop good physical skills as they confidently ride their bikes and clamber on the play equipment, while babies have plenty of space to develop their crawling and walking skills and pull themselves up against the sturdy furniture.

Well planned systems to identify children's starting points on entry are in place. Parents complete 'All about me' documents, which help staff to recognise children's individual needs and plan activities at an appropriate level for each one. Children's learning journals are shared with parents to ensure they are included in setting targets for their child's future development and understand how to support their child's learning at home. Alongside this, staff in the pre-school room in particular, often send resources home for children to share with their parents to further support them in their learning. For example, children enjoy taking 'Mitch the Monkey' home with them and helping to write about his adventures at home.

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

The effective key person system and the good level of adult attention ensures that all children form positive and trusting relationships with the staff. They go to them for reassurance and cuddles when they are feeling tired or unwell. This provides children with a secure and safe environment for them to develop their confidence and self-esteem. Parents are provided with lots of information about their child's key person and their role, in the form of photographs, personal information, leaflets and daily chats. Key persons carefully plan for their children's individual learning, spending time during the day supporting them in specific activities as well as looking after their care needs. Effective settling in procedures, both for children new to the nursery and those moving rooms within the nursery, ensure children settle quickly. Close working relationships between staff in all the nursery rooms, and carefully planned routines, help ensure children's individual needs are met as they move onto their next stage of learning.

The learning environment is enabling and helps children make good progress in their learning and development, with a wide range of resources being easily accessible for all children. The nursery effectively promotes all children's understanding of diversity and plans activities that encompass different celebrations, for example Diwali and Chinese New Year. Children with English as an additional language are appropriately supported. For example, staff know simple words and phrases in the children's home language and the nursery's consultant has organised access to translation services if needed. Children have good opportunities to gain an awareness of diversity as they use dolls, books, pictures and small world toys that reflect positive images of difference.

Children stay healthy because the nursery follows effective procedures and daily practices, which meet the children's physical, nutritional and health needs. Children and staff sit together at mealtimes enjoying the social occasion. However, two-year-old children occasionally have their snack while sitting on the floor, making it difficult for them to enjoy as they try to hold onto cups and fruit at the same time. Daily routines support children's independence skills. For example, pre-school children often help prepare the nursery tea, wearing disposable aprons and gloves and talking about which of the different healthy ingredients they need for their sandwiches. They learn that knives are sharp and can hurt you if not handled correctly. Drinks are readily accessible to all children in age-appropriate cups. Staff are attentive and when slight conflicts arise they offer timely and sensitive intervention appropriate to the ages of the children, consequently children behave well. Children who find it difficult to behave appropriately are well supported. For example, staff offer individual support to children who, on occasions, become frustrated so that other children remain safe. Babies are able to sleep according to individual preference and home routines. The nursery is in the process of refurbishing its sleep room. For example, there are now sufficient cots available to meet the needs of all the babies so they no longer sleep in buggies. Further resources, such as voiles, soft lighting and mobiles are being installed to make the room more inviting and relaxing for babies.

Posters in the bathrooms offer reminders about hand-washing routines. Children in the process of being toilet trained proudly show adults the stickers they receive for using the potty. Good nappy changing procedures are in place with staff wearing disposable aprons

and gloves. Children develop a good understanding of personal safety. They practise the evacuation procedures regularly. Children have frequent opportunities throughout the day to experience fresh air and be active. Parents are asked to make sure that children have Wellington boots and suitable outdoor clothing so children can access outdoors no matter what the weather is like. This supports their physical health and development.

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

The nursery gives a high priority to safeguarding. There are close working relationships with other professionals and support agencies to ensure children are well protected. Staff have attended training and are well-informed about the procedures to follow if they have a concern about a child. Records, documentation, policies and procedures are comprehensive and reviewed regularly to ensure they reflect current guidelines and practice. The nursery keeps thorough records of accidents, medication and attendance to further protect children and promote their welfare. Good systems are in place to monitor attendance. This ensures that adult-child ratios are always maintained and staff deployment is suitable, particularly at busy times of the day, such as early morning drop off times.

There are effective recruitment and selection procedures in place and good support for staff through the induction programme. This ensures that staff are suitable to work with children and fully understand their roles and responsibilities. Staff appraisals, along with six-weekly one-to-one sessions, ensure they have ongoing opportunities to access further training, to develop their practice and extend the learning opportunities provided for children. Senior staff meetings and full team meetings enable staff to contribute ideas and share information. The manager regularly monitors practice in the rooms and staff are beginning to observe and monitor each other's practice. These systems all contribute to improving practice and outcomes for the children. For example, changes are being made in the two-year-old room to make the role play and book corners more inviting for children.

The nursery has successfully addressed the recommendation raised at the last inspection. For example, the nursery garden has been developed to include pathways and separate areas for babies to play. The management team has a good understanding of the setting's strengths and areas to develop and detailed action plans are in place. Staff are encouraged to reflect on their practice in innovative ways, for example by answering the question of the day and exploring the policy of the month in visual ways. Parents' questionnaires and suggestions are used to shape the service. Pre-school children devise their own 'house rules' and all children are encouraged to tell staff what they particularly like doing.

Effective systems have been put in place to ensure that there is a good two-way flow of information about children's learning and developmental needs and progress between practitioners and parents. For example, parents are invited to parents' evenings, attend 'stay and play' and 'family week' sessions, have daily chats with their children's key person

and have easy access to children's learning journals and daily diaries. Parents' comments about the nursery are positive. For example, they say 'the nursery is home from home', 'staff are lovely and approachable', 'staff are really good at welcoming children and make a big fuss of them' and 'staff are well trained and make a massive difference so children are really developing'. Children who have moved from other settings are well supported so that they receive continuity in their learning and development. Good partnership working takes place between the nursery and the school that children transfer to. For example, staff are proactive in discussing transition arrangements with school staff and visits are arranged to help prepare children for the move to school. Alongside this, children explore photographs of the new setting and its staff with the support of the knowledgeable nursery staff, so that they are well prepared for their next stage in learning.

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	318602
Local authority	Sunderland
Inspection number	895280
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 17
Total number of places	98
Number of children on roll	110
Name of provider	Little Acorns Group Limited
Date of previous inspection	27/04/2010
Telephone number	01138 268376

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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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