

Little Acorns Pre-School

High Oakham Primary School, Nottingham Road, Mansfield, Notts, NG18 4SH

Inspection date

01/05/2013

Previous inspection date

18/09/2008

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

- Children have close bonds and secure emotional attachments with their key person. The partnership with parents is very effective and parents take many opportunities to be involved in children's learning and to share their knowledge of their child's development.
- High priority has been given to developing understanding of safeguarding and welfare requirements and policies and practices are effective in ensuring the safety and well-being of children.
- Practitioners are well qualified, experienced and knowledgeable about how children learn and develop. As a result, they provide a breadth of good opportunities for children to explore and take an active part in their learning.
- Leadership and management of the pre-school is effective and well supported by the parent-led committee. Practitioners know the strengths of the setting well and constantly strive to further improve the provision and children thrive in this environment.

It is not yet outstanding because

- Children do not have free-flow access to the outdoor area and this limits children's free choice of where they want to play and learn.
- Occasionally, practitioners are not always deployed effectively at activities to challenge and extend 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
- scheduled more frequently where Ofsted identifies a need to do so, for example where provision was previously judged 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 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
- scheduled at the completion of an investigation into failure to comply with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed activities in the main play areas and outside play area. The inspector also undertook a joint observation with the deputy manager in the outside play area.
- The inspector spoke with the manager, chair of the committee, practitioners and children at appropriate times throughout the inspection.
- The inspector looked at children's development records, planning documentation and a selection of policies and children's records.
- The inspector also took account of the views of parents spoken to on the day and through the pre-school's parent feedback sheets.

Inspector

Sue Riley

Full Report

Information about the setting

Little Acorns Pre-school opened in their current premises in 2003. It operates in an annexe building at the rear of High Oakham Primary School, on the outskirts of Mansfield, North Nottinghamshire. Children have access to an enclosed outdoor play area. The pre-school is easily accessible for all, including wheelchair users. It serves children from the local and wider communities. The provision is registered on the Early Years Register.

There are currently 54 children aged from two to four years on roll, all of whom are within the early years age group. The pre-school supports children with English as an additional language and children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. It receives funding for the provision of free early education to two-, three- and four-year-old children.

The pre-school is open each week day during school term-times. Sessions are varied; morning sessions are 8.45am to 11.45am, afternoon sessions are 12.30pm to 3.30pm, and lunch club is 11.45am to 12.30pm. Children have the option to stay throughout the day from 8.45am to 3.30pm. The pre-school employs seven members of childcare staff. Of these, six hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- increase the flexibility with which children can move between indoors and outdoors to enable them to choose where they play and learn best
- enhance the already good deployment of staff to ensure that they are able to provide optimum challenge and fully extend children's learning through all activities.

Inspection judgements

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

At this welcoming pre-school, practitioners have a positive impact on children's learning and development. Children make good progress in relation to their starting points and ability. Practitioners gather useful information about children's care and learning before they start at the pre-school. They carry out an initial assessment of children on entry to enable them to set children's next steps in their learning. Practitioners keep detailed records of children's interests and achievements in the form of development records and a tracker, in which parents make valuable contributions. Children make good progress in

their learning and development as practitioners have a thorough understanding of the Statutory framework of the Early Years Foundation Stage and how young children learn. Effective systems of observation and assessment ensure that children are monitored in their development across the prime and specific areas of learning. A clear picture emerges and the planning reflects what the practitioners intend to do next, in order to reinforce new learning. This means that all children are effectively challenged and benefit from well-planned engaging activities to support their individual needs. Teaching techniques are strong and children are provided with opportunities to experience a balanced variety of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Practitioners observe children during activities and make assessments of their abilities. However, they do not always deploy themselves to maximise every opportunity for learning presented by some activities. For example, staff are not always available to assist children in becoming more interactive in the use of the computer or to support children's use of the book area.

The pre-school develop close working relationships with parents and work hard to ensure parents are meaningfully involved in their children's learning. Parents access their child's development records regularly. All children are enthusiastic and engage in their learning, and display the characteristics of keen learners. They relish the limited opportunity they have to take their learning outdoors. This encourages them to be active learners who enjoy being in the fresh air. They enjoy riding the wheeled toys and digging in the garden area. Children have a lovely time as they watch where the water goes in the outdoor water play corner with the different funnels and tubing. They use their imagination as they play with the small world toys or play in the kitchen area. Children demonstrate that they understand what foods are healthy or not so healthy as they prepare meals for their friends and practitioners. The older children play cooperatively with their friends and act out life situations. The older children also have a phoneme session which is led by practitioners. This is very well planned for and children are very aware of the routine of the activity. All children are able to achieve and they are praised for their success, which raises their self-confidence.

All children sit very well and listen to the story at story time. They enthusiastically join in with the repeated refrains of the story. Children pretend to be on an aeroplane and they are encouraged to count backwards from 10 in order to take off. They use their imagination as they act out their experiences of being on a plane. Children practise their balancing skills as they walk along the beam and use the stepping stones. While children are using the tools with the play dough or using scissors to cut with they are developing their smaller muscles. The pre-school invites outside agencies to provide different physical activities with the children to extend their experiences and this includes music and movement sessions. Recently, they have invited the dentist to come in and talk with the children to raise their awareness of keeping themselves healthy. The children use the toothbrushes to clean the big sets of teeth to consolidate their own understanding.

There are many opportunities for children to learn and develop mathematical skills. For example, they demonstrate on paper that they recognise numbers to 20 and effectively learn simple addition. They have a 'show and tell' time which is for children to share their experiences from home and their family life. Along with the visitors to the setting, this helps raise children's awareness of the wider world. When playing outside with the bubbles and balloons children are beginning to understand the concept and effect of wind.

They confidently tell the practitioner that if they do not tie a knot in the balloon the 'air' will escape.

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

Children form appropriate bonds and emotional attachments with practitioners, especially their key person. The warm welcome that is extended to children and their parents each day provides children with an easy transition from their parents' care. Practitioners are highly skilled in supporting children to form strong emotional attachments, and as a consequence, all children display high levels of self-esteem and confidence. Even the youngest children move around independently, choosing their own activities with great determination and maturity. This demonstrates that they have an excellent sense of security in their environment and are, therefore, well supported to learn and develop. Children develop independence as they learn to manage personal hygiene routines and put on and take off their coats. Their health and welfare is supported as they enjoy healthy snacks in accordance with their dietary needs and preferences. Children take it in turns to choose the snack for their friends. This practice promotes their independence and raises their self-confidence as they are taking responsibility for their friends. They know where to access their drinks at any time throughout the day and have milk and water offered at snack time. Children enjoy fresh air and exercise as they can play outdoors for part of the session. However, the organisation of the session does not facilitate free-flow access to the outdoor area, which means that children are not free to choose where they play and learn. They are cared for appropriately when they have accidents or are unwell as all practitioners are qualified in first aid. Those who stay for lunch are encouraged to bring healthy lunches.

Transitional arrangements are very effective. The majority of children move up to the school on site and enjoy visits into the nursery to help them become familiar with the setting. Practitioners also liaise effectively with other Early Years Foundation Stage providers that a small number of children attend or move on to. They share summary documents to ensure children experience smooth transitions. The settling-in visit is used as a time for practitioners to talk to parents about children and make some observations, which contribute to a baseline assessment. Practitioners therefore know children's starting points and can begin to plan for their next steps. They seek specialist advice for children in need of additional support, which enables them to use effective strategies to support them. As a result, children make good progress to catch up in their development. Practitioners share the children's daily activities with parents and make suggestions for learning opportunities to further support their development at home. They are quick to praise and build self-esteem and as a result, children develop the self-confidence to participate and experience a wide range of learning activities. This developing confidence is evident in the way that children move from one activity to another, observing the routines of the pre-school and sharing resources amicably.

Practitioners give children's safety the highest priority and they have robust procedures and policies in place to help keep children safe. Routine risk assessments ensure that indoor and outdoor environments are safe. Practitioners work well as a team and are deployed within the pre-school to ensure children's safety. Children feel safe and secure in

the pre-school as adults are always on hand for reassurance. This close supervision helps to give children a good sense of well-being, especially when new to the pre-school. Practitioners promote an awareness of safety issues during play activities. Regular fire drills consolidate children's understanding of staying safe. The pre-school environment is stimulating and enables children to follow their own interests. Children share toys, play cooperatively and show care and concern for one another. Practitioners are good role models for the children as they treat them with respect. As a result, the atmosphere in the pre-school is calm, relaxed, respectful and caring. Children are well behaved and respond positively to practitioners' requests during the day. For example, children assist in helping to tidy away activities accompanied by a 'tidy-up tune', meaning they are effectively learning how to keep their environment in good order.

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

All practitioners have a secure knowledge and understanding of the learning and development requirements of the Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage. The senior management team oversee the delivery of the educational programmes. They monitor the levels of planning and assessment for all children and make sure that records are accurate and up to date. This means that the pre-school offers a broad range of experiences to help all children to progress towards the early learning goals. The manager of the pre-school provides capable leadership to her team and is supported effectively by the management committee made up of parents of the children attending the pre-school. All practitioners convey a genuine enthusiasm and passion for their work and this is evident in their daily interventions with the children.

The manager understands her overall responsibility and ensures the safeguarding and welfare requirements are implemented. Effective recruitment procedures ensure that only those suitable to work with children are appointed and a thorough induction process is in place for new employees. Children's safety is given high priority at the pre-school. Children's demeanour shows they feel safe and secure in their environment and that they trust those responsible for their care. Procedures for safeguarding children are well understood and managed. Practitioners know how to look out for signs and symptoms of abuse and can refer any concerns appropriately. Parents are advised of the setting's policy and have further information provided on a notice board. The safeguarding policy and procedure is the current policy of the month on display. Information needed to support children's welfare is sought at the time of registration. This includes medical history, allergies and known health needs as well as likes and dislikes. The manager ensures a high adult to child ratio in order to provide quality individual attention when needed. Thorough risk assessments are carried out and daily checks of the premises ensure that it is safe and secure for the children. The premises are locked once the children arrive, children can then access all areas of the pre-school, including the outdoors safely. Practitioners ensure that all records relating to children's health and safety are well maintained.

Practitioners are competently monitored, coached, mentored and supported by the manager and deputy manager. An established system of annual appraisals and supervision

meetings ensures practitioners feel valued and supported. Continuous professional development arises from identified priorities and practitioners' own needs. The manager is dedicated and committed and a good role model for the practitioner team. Partnerships with parents and others are a great strength. Practitioners liaise very closely with parents regarding children's progress towards the early learning goals. Parents appreciate the different methods of communication offered by the pre-school, daily discussions, written reports and consultations. Relationships between parents and practitioners are relaxed and very well established. Parents comment on how effective the settling-in routine had been for themselves and their child, and feel that the practitioners are very caring. They also comment that they are really happy with their child's progress, and the fact that they were sharing and making friends. Parents also comment that their children are very keen to talk about their day and the activities they have been doing. Practitioners work with specialist providers, such as speech therapists, to develop strategies to support children who need additional support. This process effectively helps to support partnership working and continuity for children and their families.

Partnerships with other professionals and agencies are securely in place. Well-established partnerships with other providers of the Early Years Foundation Stage help to support children and ensure that their needs are fully met. As a consequence, all children are happy, relaxed and have an enjoyable experience. The manager incorporates the views of practitioners, parents and children in plans for development and change. Plans for the future build on current successes and are firmly based on supporting children's achievements. For example, practitioners recently improved the mark-making provision outdoors, after noticing that boys were not accessing this area indoors. By providing large sheets of paper and big brushes and various tools in the digging area, practitioners have noticed a big improvement in the frequency with which boys engage in these activities. The management committee are very supportive of the pre-school and the pre-school continues to maintain a good capacity to improve. For example, the management committee have identified funds to provide a canopy and sliding doors to improve access to the outdoor play area.

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 action. 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	EY257929
Local authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	911950
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 5
Total number of places	24
Number of children on roll	54
Name of provider	Little Acorns Pre-School Group Committee
Date of previous inspection	18/09/2008
Telephone number	07749 047107

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Type of provision

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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, which are usually the childminder's 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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