

Little Acorns

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

Inspection date	16/09/2013
Previous inspection date	10/12/2012

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		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 make good progress in their learning because staff have a secure knowledge of children's interests and know how to move them forward in their learning.
- Children feel a strong sense of belonging because great care is taken to ensure they receive consistency of care from their key persons.
- Managers monitor staff performance well and have effectively implemented changes to the provision in order to raise standards in children's learning and development, which benefits all children.
- Partnerships with parents are generally effective in extending children's learning in the home and in the nursery. This is because staff have good systems in place to obtain information from parents about their child's interests and are successful in giving them ideas about how to support their child's learning at home.

It is not yet outstanding because

- The learning environment in the pre-school room is not fully developed to support children's existing good literacy skills in order that they can make the best progress possible in their reading and writing skills.
- For some children the quality of information shared with parents and other professionals is not as strong to support continuity of care.

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.

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 all of the rooms and in the outside area.
The inspector checked evidence of suitability of staff working with the children and
- looked at induction and staff training procedures. The inspector also looked at policies and children's records.
- The inspector spoke to the manager, the early years and business development manager of the Little Acorns group and staff in the nursery.
- The inspector looked through children's observation records and planning documentation and discussed these with staff.
- The inspector took account of the views of children and three parents spoken to on the day.

Inspector

Emily Wheeldon

Full Report

Information about the setting

Little Acorns Day Nursery was registered in 2006 on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. It is one of 10 nurseries owned by Little Acorns group limited. The nursery is situated in the Urmston area of Trafford, Manchester. The nursery serves the local area and is accessible to all children. It operates from four rooms on two floors of a large Victorian house and there is an enclosed area available for outdoor play.

The nursery employs 17 members of childcare staff. Of these, nine hold appropriate early years qualifications to at least level 3 and two are working towards 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 34 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.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- create an environment which is rich in print where children can learn about words by, for example, using signs, posters and names and including different reading materials to extend literacy skills

- ensure children's observation records are completed consistently so that children benefit from the full richness of the information gathered and information can be shared with parents and other professionals.

Inspection judgements

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

Children are making good progress in their learning and development. This is because activities engage children and are effectively planned around their interests. Staff regularly observe children playing and speak to parents in order to gain an accurate picture of children's interests and needs. Parents are fully involved in the observation process and contribute to children's starting points and learning in a number of ways. For example, staff send weekend books home for parents to write about activities their child has enjoyed over the weekend. The progress check at age two and other assessments are

shared with parents, which give ideas about how to extend children's learning at home. As a result, children make strides in their learning. Staff work closely with parents of children with English as an additional language in order to meet their needs. For example, staff speak to parents to find out key words in their home language. Consequently, children have a better understanding about what staff are trying to say while feeling a strong sense of belonging in the nursery.

Observations are of good quality and analysed effectively in observation summaries so staff can identify children's next steps in their learning. However, observation records for a few children are not consistently up-to-date, although photographic evidence available. As a result, the quality of information records shared with parents and other professionals is not always robust but staff have a good knowledge of the children, so this has little impact on their overall development. The summary sheets are evaluated so staff have a good understanding of children's abilities and whether or not they are working at the expected level for their development. Assessments are carried out at regular intervals from the very beginning and then every three months. This effectively informs staff of any gaps in children's learning and where support is needed, if required. Good consideration is given to the foundations for learning for the youngest children. For instance, staff carefully tailor learning opportunities around personal, social and emotional development, communication and language and physical skills for babies and toddlers. As a result, they are well prepared for the next stage in their learning.

Staff interactions and teaching are strong across the different age groups in this nursery. With a secure key person system embedded, children feel emotionally secure and relaxed. Babies demonstrate they are happy and content when they sit on their key person's knee and listen to a story. They point to pictures of interest and begin to learn how to turn pages independently. Staff effectively support children's communication and language skills by reinforcing vocabulary. For example, babies are asked to look at a series of farmyard animal photographs in a line and staff say, 'Where is the cow?' Babies independently select the correct photograph and pass it to the member of staff. They demonstrate they are feeling a great sense of pride as they are smiling and keen to play the game again. Toddlers delight in stacking a series of plastic blocks in the outside area and show effective characteristics of learning. For example, they decide to build a chair for their friends to sit on. They take turns and demonstrate good partnerships with other children and adults. Staff extend toddlers' thinking skills well by saying, 'Oh no, what has happened?' when a toddler pushes the chair over accidentally. Toddlers then say, 'I pushed it over so it fell down.' This means that they are beginning to learn the cause and effect of things.

Staff have high expectations. Good teaching is securely rooted in mathematics in the pre-school room because staff build on children's existing knowledge about numbers. For example, pre-school children are challenged to count beyond twenty. They carefully and independently count out cubes they used to weigh a toy rabbit. Staff encourage them to see how many cubes it takes to lift the rabbit in the air and then they ask them to recount the cubes again for accuracy. Consequently, pre-school children learn how to count accurately and are very well equipped with the skills necessary for the next stage of their learning in school. Literacy skills are taught well by staff. For instance, children in pre-school regularly practise sounding out letter sounds. They also learn to form letters by

tracing their fingers over sand-papered letters on flashcards while trying to think of words that begin with the same letter. Pre-school children enjoy reading and writing. However, the learning environment is not particularly rich in print in order to support children in extending their early literacy skills.

Children have positive experiences of different cultures and festivals and children with English as an additional language are taken into account. For example, staff worked closely with parents of children from China and together they organised activities around Chinese New Year. Children were very excited about tasting Chinese food and learning about different Chinese customs hence gaining a good awareness of the wider world. A wide range of exciting creative activities are planned for all children. For example, toddlers delight in painting their feet and hands to make prints on paper. They enjoy the sensation of cold paint on their feet and giggle as they watch the marks they make.

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

Children enjoy their time at this friendly and inclusive nursery. They develop close and caring relationships with all staff, and particularly with their key person. A successful implementation of the key person system ensures that all children form secure emotional attachments. Children's well-being is further enhanced by the addition of a secondary key person who is in place should a child's key person require cover. This provides babies and children with an effective nurturing environment and close bonds are formed. Staff are knowledgeable about the role of the key person and understand the importance of forming strong attachments with children. Leaflets containing information about children's key persons are located outside all of the rooms. They are effective in informing parents about individual staff on a personal and professional level. For example, the leaflets list the qualifications and give details about the experience of staff and a brief description about their backgrounds, such as their hobbies. There are display boards in each of the rooms which have photographs of key persons and lists of the children in their key group. Parents are asked to complete and return 'All about Me' booklets by key persons, so staff have information about children's interests, needs and home routines. Key persons effectively mirror home routines in the nursery to ensure consistency of care. They speak to parents on a daily basis to update them about their learning and development and through information gathered in children's assessment records.

Great emphasis is placed on promoting children's personal, social and emotional development. Babies and children show a strong sense of belonging within the nursery. Staff are kind and attentive and see to babies who need a cuddle and offer reassurance to toddlers who are reticent about walking down the stairs. Staff offer a gentle hand and lead them carefully down the stairs while praising them for having a go. They provide children with quiet times throughout the day, such as story time, and they sit on the floor so children can seek comfort more easily. Pre-school children display good levels of confidence and take responsibility for their own belongings and learning from a very early age. For example, they attempt to write their name on a board at the beginning of their session and then go to find their name card. They are given special jobs, such as helping to clean the paint pots, so they learn to take on responsibilities from an early age. Toddlers are encouraged to pull on wellington boots and zip up coats before going out to

play, therefore, demonstrating effective self-help skills.

Effective arrangements are in place when children move rooms within the setting, making sure the key person is knowledgeable about each child's needs, interests and parents' preferences. This helps to prepare children and parents and ensures transitions are seamless. Parents are complimentary about the staff and the way they work closely with them. For example, they say, 'Staff are very welcoming, friendly and approachable. My babies are due to move up to toddlers and we have had advanced warning about this. This was done on an individual basis and staff took into account their needs. The changes did not occur until arrangements had been discussed with us. Communication between staff and parents is good.' Pre-school children are well prepared for their next stage in their learning in school because effective procedures are embedded. For example, staff plan opportunities for children to look at particular resources to do with school life, such as school uniform and school bags. Teachers are invited in to the nursery to meet key persons and to get to know the children and transition records are passed on to them.

All children are secure in their understanding of healthy practices. They choose from a wide range of healthy food options, such as fresh fruit and cooked meals. Good attention is given to monitoring the care routines of babies and younger children, especially in regard to their feeds, meals and sleep routines. Staff encourage children to manage their own personal hygiene and care practices, such as learning to use the potty. Children benefit from fresh air and daily exercise in a well-resourced outside area. Babies learn to crawl and pull themselves up on furniture and crawl and grasp objects on the decking area. Toddlers and pre-school children excitedly pedal bikes, play chasing games and climb up steps leading to a slide.

Behaviour is very good as staff supervise children well at all times and are very positive role models to children. They regularly boost children's self-esteem and say, 'Well done, you are clever.' Children demonstrate a good understanding about rules and know, for example, that they must sit down at the table when eating. Children play harmoniously as a group and feel very proud of their achievements and this contributes to very positive behaviour. Pre-school children develop an effective understanding of keeping themselves safe. For example, they know they must sit on chairs properly so they do not tip over and hurt themselves. Good quality resources are organised well so that children can self-select and take the lead in their play. Areas of learning are clearly defined and children are familiar with where equipment is kept.

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

Leadership and management are strong. Since the last inspection managers and staff have worked hard and successfully to move the nursery forward given the challenges they faced. For example, the nursery has experienced a high turnover of staff including the appointment of a new manager and deputy manager. The cohesive working and positive relationships within the new staff team has contributed effectively to raising standards of care. Actions from the previous inspection have been addressed and implemented swiftly. The key person system is now fully in place to ensure children's well-being is supported.

Staff are clear about their role and the importance of developing positive relationships with individual children and their parents. This ensures children form secure emotional attachments, and their individual care needs and routines are met effectively. Assessment is more robust and is an integral part of identifying children's learning priorities both on entry and ongoing. As a result, learning experiences for children are more challenging and children make good progress. Arrangements are now in place for observation, assessment and tracking of children's progress in order to plan relevant experiences for children. Staff are more proactive about engaging with parents in order to support them in contributing to the observation process and staff suggest ideas about further learning at home. This means that children's learning is effectively extended in the home and links with parents are strengthened even further.

Managers have successfully extended systems for monitoring performance and have implemented an effective programme of training to improve staff's knowledge and practice. For example, procedures to observe and evaluate practice within the setting, together with close monitoring of the educational programmes, ensures all children achieve well. Training around the role of the key person was recently implemented and further training around child development is planned. The planning and assessment systems, and the quality of teaching and learning are monitored, to make sure all children make good progress in their learning and development.

The managers and staff's passion and commitment to ongoing improvement is demonstrated by much improved communication with parents. This is clearly seen in robust action plans and discussions and comments from parents in children's records. Staff successfully gather views from children, parents and other professionals in order to inform planning as part of the self-evaluation process. They are proactive and inform parents about changes, such as the appointment of a new member of staff, so they are prepared well in advance. This is achieved effectively by staff speaking informally to parents on a daily basis, sending emails and posting newsletters.

All staff have a secure knowledge and understanding of safeguarding policies and procedures. They clearly demonstrate the appropriate action to take in the event of any allegations or signs of child abuse. Children are further protected by the nursery's robust recruitment, vetting and induction procedures, which ensure staff are suitable to work with children. Children's health and safety is enhanced by the robust and consistent implementation of policies and procedures that ensure the safe and efficient management of the provision. This includes comprehensive risk assessments and daily safety checks on the premises and the outdoor area. Staff are vigilant about arrival and collection procedures, and good security precautions contribute to children's safety. All visitors are required to produce identification before entering the building and sign a visitor book. All required documentation needed to meet the welfare requirements of the Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage is in place.

Well-established links are forged with parents, local schools and other professionals and mean effective continuity of care for children. Staff recognise the importance of smooth transition arrangements for children to ensure their individual care and learning needs are fully supported. They make strong partnerships with local schools to support children when they move on to their next phase in learning. This is evident in the transition

meetings held between teachers and staff in the nursery and the sharing of information about children's learning and development.

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 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	EY318335
Local authority	Trafford
Inspection number	914000
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 17
Total number of places	71
Number of children on roll	34
Name of provider	Little Acorns Group Limited
Date of previous inspection	10/12/2012
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, 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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