

Little Acorns Day Nursery

The Elim Family Centre, Hartfield Road, EASTBOURNE, East Sussex, BN21 2ET

Inspection date	08/10/2013
Previous inspection date	24/09/2012

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

- Staff build strong partnerships with parents, dealing professionally with any issues and sharing detailed information about children's care and development.
- Staff skilfully organise resources and the routine maximises children's opportunities for free play, giving them independence and time to develop their ideas.
- Staff focus on children's interests and include them in planning so children make good progress from their starting points and capabilities.
- Children benefit from consistent care because managers and staff work well with schools and other professionals.

It is not yet outstanding because

- Children aged under two are sometimes restricted in exploratory and sensory play.
- Staff do not consistently use open questions and statements to support children's critical thinking.

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 children at play in the under-twos room, the pre-school room and the outdoor area.
- The inspector spoke with several parents about their experience of using the nursery.
- The inspector met with the manager and registered person to discuss management issues and examine documentation.
- The inspector and manager carried out a joint observation.

Inspector

Susan McCourt

Full Report

Information about the setting

Little Acorns Day Nursery opened in 2008. It operates from a purpose built unit in a building owned by the Elim Family Centre in Eastbourne. The nursery has access to two large playrooms, a smaller play room, toilet area, kitchen, office and staff room on the first floor of the building. There is a lift for access and a roof terrace garden. The nursery opens five days a week for 50 weeks of the year. Opening hours are from 7.30am to 6pm. The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register. There are currently 116 children on roll in the early years age range. The nursery is in receipt of funding for the provision of free early education for children aged two, three and four years. The nursery currently supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and also supports a number of children learning English as an additional language. The nursery employs 18 staff. All of the staff have at least a level 3 qualification.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- enhance open ended messy play for children aged under two by allowing them extended periods of time to explore the materials

- improve children's critical thinking skills by making greater use of open questions and giving children time to respond.

Inspection judgements

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

Staff have a good understanding of how to meet children's learning and development needs. They provide a broad and balanced curriculum that covers all areas of learning. Children have a great deal of independence in their play which helps them to be active learners, following their curiosity and interests. Staff also plan interesting and well structured adult-led activities on topics and themes. This helps children to make good progress through the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Staff have good teaching skills. They foster the communication skills of children under two by using sign language to add meaning to their spoken words. Staff use a wide range of words and noises to foster babbling 'conversations' with young children, such as making the noise of an ambulance or helicopter. This helps babies to enjoy exploring the sounds they make and feel confident to communicate. Children aged two and over gain a wide

vocabulary as they play because staff are on hand to talk and play with children. For example, children making cakes in the sand pit have their play extended into a birthday celebration by staff. In this way, staff pick up on children's ideas and skilfully add other challenges. Staff use some open questions to build conversations but this is not consistent enough to promote children's problem solving skills and critical thinking fully. Children of all ages enjoy story times because staff are skilled at engaging children in the books and encouraging their interaction. Children enjoy early writing activities, such as painting the wall with water or using the chalk boards in the outdoor area. Staff support boys' early writing by providing clipboards and comics with their superhero play. Children aged under two enjoy exploring paint and other mark-making materials. However, sometimes they are removed from the activity when they have made a picture, rather than allowed to carry on exploring in open-ended play. Older children enjoy a wide range of messy play and craft activities. Their skills in expressive arts and design are fostered when they play in the home role play area. Children play shops and use number frequently and spontaneously to count what they are buying, pay and get change. This helps them to consolidate their mathematical skills while engaging in imaginative play.

Staff work closely with parents to establish children's starting points. They then make frequent observations of children's achievements and track children's learning against their expected levels of development. Staff establish children's next steps and make plans to facilitate them in a timely way. This means that children make good progress given their starting points and capabilities. Staff meet regularly with parents to share the learning journals and incorporate parents' ideas and views. This builds a strong partnership. When children move between age groups in the nursery or move on to school, staff prepare transition documents to pass on. This helps to provide a smooth transition.

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

The nursery has a very effective key person system. Staff build a close relationship with the child and get to know their individual routine. This is particularly the case in the under-twos room, where babies and young toddlers can follow their own routine as they would at home. Parents can stay and settle their child as often as required to make sure they are confident to separate. When they move to the next age group, the key person accompanies the child to the next age group for a number of visits. This helps the child to be familiar with the new play areas before making the final move. Staff are careful to only initiate this after consulting with the parents about the child's development. As a result, children are confident and well settled. Staff skilfully arrange the learning environments to give children great independence and choice. Good quality resources are within reach of the children so they can follow their interests and devise their own play. The outdoor area provides an interesting space for children to play all year round and reflects all areas of learning.

Children enjoy a healthy lifestyle. Meals are prepared every day on the premises and any packed lunches are stored correctly to keep them in good condition. Children help to prepare the tables ready for the sociable mealtimes and sit with their friends. Children learn about what foods are healthy in different activities. They also enjoy trying new

foods. Children have access to water all through the day. Children follow good hygiene routines. They wash their hands before eating and have individual flannels to wipe their faces and hands afterwards. Staff change babies' nappies frequently through the day to make sure they are comfortable. Children benefit from a range of activities to support their physical development. They go on regular outings in the local community and use different physical play equipment in the outdoor play area. Children build their small muscles in craft and early writing activities. Young children can learn to crawl and pull themselves up to standing on the low furniture in the under-twos room. Children learn how to keep themselves safe. For example, in superhero play staff explain to children that they need to be careful of each other and be nice to their friends. Children also play carefully on the slide and when carrying items around, such as a wheelbarrow of toys.

Children's behaviour is good. They understand how to take turns and enjoy cooperative play. Staff work with the children to sort out any disputes and give consistent firm boundaries. This helps children develop negotiation skills and become assertive. Children invite their friends to play with them and play together for lengthy periods. Children learn to be independent in their self care as they do up their coats and manage their shoes. Overall, they acquire good skills to help them as they move on to school.

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

Leaders and managers have a good understanding of how to meet the safeguarding and welfare requirements. All staff have been checked as to their suitability and undergo rigorous recruitment procedures. The policies and procedures are regularly reviewed to keep them up to date, and staff are very familiar with their role in child protection. Staff have a good understanding of who to report to with any concerns they may have about the welfare of a child. There are good security systems in place because only staff have the door codes to the nursery and playrooms and these are renewed regularly. Parents are reminded not to let any other people into the building as they enter. Staff keep documentation and records in a well-organised way. For example, staff are vigilant to record accurately any medication or accidents children may have. This underpins children's well-being. All staff are well qualified for their role and a well-established supervision and appraisal system supports staff to develop their knowledge and understanding further. Senior managers review the provision frequently to enhance and refine the outcomes for children. For example, when reviewing the new 'snack bar' style format they noticed that younger children were less likely to have snack than before. As a result they started a separate snack time for children aged two so that they could be sure the children were getting something to eat and drink. Managers also respond in very effective ways to recommendations raised at previous inspections, such as restructuring children's group times. This means that children now have greater opportunities to be involved in the activity. The manager monitors the work of staff to identify any achievement gaps that children may have. As a result, she can see where there are any gaps in the resources, planning or staff knowledge and take steps to address them. This means the provision is consistently improving.

Parents are very appreciative of the way staff work in partnership with them. Staff give detailed verbal feedback about the child's day and parents comment on how the staff are genuinely interested, involving the children in giving this feedback. Parents are pleased with the developmental progress their children make as a result of attending and praise the staff's teaching skills. Staff work professionally with parents to address any issues they may raise. For example, the nursery has started an 'employee of the month' scheme on the recommendation of parents so that parents can nominate and reward staff. Parents from a variety of cultures enjoy coming in to the nursery to share their food, songs and stories. The nursery staff build equally strong partnerships with schools and other agencies. The manager makes sure that children with additional needs are assessed in a timely way so that they can get the support they need before moving on to school. Where children have other carers, such as childminders, staff make sure that information is passed between parents and all the carers so that the child enjoys consistent care. Staff visit schools shortly after the reception children have settled in. This helps them to review their work in preparing children for school, as they get feedback about how the previous year have done.

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	EY373498
Local authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	933991
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 5
Total number of places	70
Number of children on roll	116
Name of provider	Elim Family Church Committee
Date of previous inspection	24/09/2012
Telephone number	01323 731843

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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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