

# Little Acorns

Staffordshire County Council, Corbett C E Primary School, Six Ashes Road, Bobbington, STOURBRIDGE, West Midlands, DY7 5DU

<b>Inspection date</b>	06/11/2013
Previous inspection date	08/02/2010

<b>The quality and standards of the early years provision</b>	<b>This inspection:</b>	1
	Previous inspection:	3
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		1
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		1
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		1

## The quality and standards of the early years provision

### This provision is outstanding

- Excellent staff development, monitoring and mentoring results in consistent teaching that is of a high quality; consequently, children make outstanding progress in their early learning and development.
- Highly accurate and precise assessment informs the excellent planning that supports children in developing the attributes and skills necessary for effective learning as they prepare for their move into school.
- Safeguarding arrangements are extremely well-established to ensure that any concerns would be managed swiftly and in the child's best interests at all times; parents are fully informed of this duty of care with regard to child protection.
- Children's communication and language development is very effectively supported in the excellent language-rich environment, where staff use their voices and facial expressions to promote engagement and the recognition of sounds and letters.
- Every child is valued and respected as excellent partnerships with other agencies ensure that their individual needs are identified and met where necessary, particularly where children are assessed as benefitting from additional support to reach their full potential.
- Parents and carers have excellent opportunities to be involved with their children's early learning and development; they understand what and how their children learn and share their achievements from home, developing a consistent and shared approach to their children's progress.

## 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 throughout the setting in both indoor and outdoor spaces, speaking and interacting with children appropriately.
- The inspector spoke with the business manager of the organisation, the manager and staff at appropriate times throughout the day.
- The inspector carried out a safety check on the premises and activities.
- The inspector looked at documentation, including children's records, learning and development information, staff suitability records and a selection of policies and procedures.
- The inspector took into account the views of parents through discussion and from written questionnaires sent out by the provider.

## Inspector

Patricia Webb

## Full report

### Information about the setting

Little Acorns was registered in 2008 on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. It is situated in Corbett CE Primary School in the village of Bobbington, Staffordshire and is privately owned and managed. The nursery serves a wide catchment area as well as the village and is accessible to all children. It operates from a main playroom with additional use of the school hall and computer suite. There is an enclosed area available for outdoor play with additional use of school facilities and the forest school area.

The nursery employs three members of childcare staff, all of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3. The manager holds Early Years Professional Status and has a BA(Honours) degree. The business manager for the organisation also holds Early Years Professional and Qualified Teacher Status.

Little Acorns is open Monday to Friday, term time only. Sessions are from 7.45am until 6pm. Children attend for a variety of sessions. Extended provision is offered during the school holidays at another of the organisation's settings in a nearby village. There are currently 35 children attending, of whom 24 are in the early years age group. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. It supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

### What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- enhance the excellent opportunities for outdoor learning by completing the work on the forest school area and maximising its use as an exciting and highly stimulating resource.

### Inspection judgements

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

The quality of teaching is excellent in this highly stimulating and supportive setting. Children make extremely strong progress as they engage in activities designed to extend, motivate and excite them. Staff are very well-qualified and bring their skills and enthusiasm to the educational programmes planned for all children. Consequently, each child is supported in making outstanding progress, given their varying abilities and starting points. Observations and assessments are extremely accurate and pertinent to each child and their developmental records clearly show staff's professional knowledge of how

children learn effectively. The records note progress and staff also consider children's levels of involvement, assessing how children gain the necessary attributes and characteristics to promote effective learning. Records and observations also note how children consolidate their learning, using the vast range of resources and activities. For example, pouring and measuring in the water tray play is then used by children as they serve themselves with their drinks at snack and mealtime. Such insight into children's individual characters and interests contributes to how well-prepared they are for the move into full-time school. School staff speak very highly of how this in-depth assessment ensures that children settle into the structure of full-time school swiftly. This maximises their learning opportunities very positively.

Children are busy in the setting. They enjoy circle time, learning to listen, pay attention and give each other due consideration when talking. They share special events from home, discussing a recent trip to Blackpool to see the lights. Discussions take place comparing the weather in Blackpool and Dubai, where the nursery bear visited during half term. Staff encourage children's communication and language development very effectively as all aspects of this area of learning are addressed. Staff reinforce sounds and letters, drawing children's attention to the rhythm of words, such as their names. They clap in time to the various syllables in their names and more able children note that some names have the same number of claps. Staff then extend this further to encourage improved pronunciation, as small figures of animals are used to recreate their sounds. The 'rrr' sound for the tiger's roar helps children to consider how to use their tongue against their teeth to create the correct sound. Children also involve their parents as they 'write' their names on their cards on arrival and share their efforts. Parents know the routine and are knowledgeable in supporting their children in this. For example, when a child is creating some unrecognisable letters, a parent draws the dots of the name to support success for the child. Together they celebrate as the child proudly shows the result to staff. This demonstrates the improvement the setting has made in engaging parents and families in their children's learning, informing them of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Younger children delight in making marks in various media as they gain control over their small muscles in preparation for finer, more precise 'writing'. They draw with sticks in the mud and note the prints made by their wellington boots, identifying each other's prints from the markings on the soles.

Children's literacy is fostered as children refer to reference books to extend their thinking, such as when looking at people who help us in society. Staff stand back and relish the spontaneous actions of children as, for example, a child sits in the adult 'story chair' and 'reads' the story. The child holds the book as the adults do, taking control of the small group of children who listen intently.

Cookery activities are used to great effect as children learn about volume and capacity, as well as the changes that happen when mixing dry and wet ingredients. They are encouraged to consider addition and subtraction as a member of staff purposefully raises too many fingers and children point out that this is incorrect. The member of staff then asks what she needs to do to make it right and children correct her accurately. High fives are then shared between children and staff to celebrate success and promote children's sense of achievement. All children are included as staff use a range of methods to communicate and enable children to make choices about their activity and learning. At

circle time, children discuss and plan their activities and consider which resources they may use. The setting also has picture cards of areas in the setting, the resources and equipment, so that children with English as an additional language and those with emerging spoken language can make informed choices. The use of sign language also supports every child in communicating their needs effectively, including children who may be identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities. Staff work very sensitively with parents and carers, particularly where assessment reveals the need for additional support. This is evident for children who may not be yet reaching their expected development and also for children who are achieving above expectations. Staff liaise very well with the host school to ensure that all children are challenged and extended consistently.

Children have extensive opportunities to become aware of differences in the world as they learn about some cultural celebrations and learn different languages. They have recently learned some elements of Swedish and French and are about to embark on Spanish, extending their understanding of the wider world. They use the computer with skill to activate appropriate games and gain control and dexterity with the mouse and the keys. They help each other when a game comes to an end, showing each other where to access the next stage. Staff are extremely intuitive in their teaching and support as they stand back and empower children to develop such skills for themselves, noting that children show enthusiasm, motivation and engagement in their learning. Staff are currently reviewing the forest school activity area to enhance the opportunities for children to consolidate their learning and skills in different situations.

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

Children make very strong attachments with their highly skilled and caring key persons in the setting. Their move, from the sister setting to Little Acorns, is managed extremely sensitively and in very close partnerships with parents and carers. This applies also to children who attend the setting for the first time. They attend as many settling-in sessions as deemed necessary, so that they can become familiar with the routines, the new environment and the structure of the session. Parents develop a strong sense of trust with staff, knowing that they would be called to their child if there were any concerns about the child's welfare. Parents supply detailed information about their child, so that staff can gain an awareness of their characters and particular needs. For example, knowing that a child becomes upset if the various food items are touching on the lunch tray helps staff ensure that this does not happen and so settle the child more easily.

Children's behaviour is managed very sensitively and with a great emphasis on acknowledging efforts as well as achievements. Children delight in sharing 'high fives' with staff and telling parents of their success. They praise each other too, for example, when helping each other to tidy away before lunchtime. They help each other to pour their drinks of milk and water and dispose of their uneaten foods into the correct bin. This promotes a strong sense of responsibility, particularly as children prepare for school routines and expectations. Children know why following a healthy diet contributes to their well-being. They remind parents about how some foods are acceptable as treats, pointing

out the display they have completed. Over the year, they grow various fruits and vegetables, often using the foods during snack time and taking some produce home to share with their families. This raises children's awareness of where food comes from and the need to care and tend such plants. They chat about being active in their play and enjoy the dance sessions, joining in with gusto. They develop their co-ordination and move with care and safety in the hall, following the extremely enthusiastic and very well-planned direction from the member of staff. Children's enjoyment of such activities is further enhanced as they join up with older children and siblings from the school. This also contributes to the smooth move to the next steps in their learning and development.

Children develop independence rapidly as they know the importance of keeping fit and healthy. They relish active play on a free-flow basis, moving indoors and outside as they wish, managing the thick plastic curtain with care. They transport their resources around the setting, exploring and discovering as they go. Staff use such activity to reinforce children's understanding of safety and assessing risks for themselves. Children know why it is important to use the scissors with care and remind each other. Role play is also used to great effect as, for instance, a child sets about attacking a 'pile of ironing' and staff encourage critical thinking as they ask about the temperature of the iron. The child replies that 'real irons get hot' and they must not be touched.

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

Following the last inspection, the management has made significant improvement to the provision. The appointment of an extremely skilled and experienced manager has been instrumental in driving forward the progress children make in this stimulating and very nurturing environment. The manager works very closely with the business manager of the organisation and together, they motivate, enthuse and mentor staff in delivering excellent teaching and caring for all children. There is a very strong shared sense of purpose in ensuring that all requirements for the Early Years Foundation Stage are met. Excellent systems for monitoring and assessing the quality of teaching and safeguarding ensure consistency, building on staff's individual skills to enhance children's enjoyment and achievement. Staff speak with high regard for the opportunities and support they receive in developing their practice and qualifications, eager to attend relevant training. This acquired knowledge is carefully evaluated and shared with all staff and any changes or adaptations to practice are reviewed and assessed for their impact on children's care, learning and development. For example, staff attended specific training to develop children's communication and language by organising the environment more thoughtfully. This was also attended by some of the school staff, so that there is consistency in the teaching and children are settled and familiar with expectations.

Safeguarding arrangements are extremely well-established to protect children and promote their welfare and well-being. Staff have an excellent knowledge of their roles and responsibilities in protecting children from harm and update their training regularly. Senior staff attend higher levels of training to ensure that any child protection concerns would be managed in the best interest of the child at all times. Close partnerships with other

relevant agencies and professionals are in place to ensure that appropriate support and guidance can be accessed swiftly as and when necessary for individual children. Visitors to the setting are reminded about not using mobile telephones or cameras, in order to maintain children's privacy and protect children. They are also reminded that they have a duty to report any concerns they may see or hear while in the setting, emphasising the fact that child protection is everyone's responsibility.

Parents are further assured of their child's safety as the requirement and selection of staff is extremely rigorous and robust. Managers follow 'safer recruitment' processes and ensure that all adults working with children are qualified and suitable. Detailed records are maintained to monitor staff practice and support any member of staff as they hone and develop their confidence and teaching. Hazards to children are significantly minimised as staff are extremely diligent in conducting thorough risk assessments. Accidents are managed with great care and attention to comforting children. The records are collated and analysed regularly to identify any potential areas of the provision that may give cause for concern and where necessary these are addressed swiftly to keep children safe both on and off the premises. All of the required documentation, policies and procedures are in place for the safe and highly efficient operation of the provision. All records are readily available for inspection.

The managers conduct regular audits of staff training, skills and practice to ensure that the quality continues to improve and includes staff observing and commenting on the quality of the management team in bringing about further development. This in-depth assessment of the provision is now very well-established and had been instrumental in driving the excellent progress children make in the small but highly stimulating environment. Parents state that they never have to worry about their child in the setting as they know staff very well and have great confidence in them. Children chat animatedly about what they have done when they get home and parents understand how the learning that goes on at home is as important as that at the setting. They relish the opportunities to influence practice through their comments on the questionnaires and are looking forward to implementing some of their contributions to the planning of the forest school area.

### **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	Requires improvement	The provision is not giving children a good standard of early years education and/or there are minor breaches of the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be monitored and inspected within twelve months of the date of this inspection.
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 monitored and inspected again within six 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	EY378325
<b>Local authority</b>	Staffordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	821472
<b>Type of provision</b>	
<b>Registration category</b>	Childcare - Non-Domestic
<b>Age range of children</b>	0 - 17
<b>Total number of places</b>	16
<b>Number of children on roll</b>	35
<b>Name of provider</b>	Jennifer Ann Vyse
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	08/02/2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01384 221702

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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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