

# Little Acorns (North East) Ltd.

216-218 Park Road, South Moor, Stanley, Co Durham, DH9 7AN

## Inspection date

18/03/2014

Previous inspection date

17/02/2009

## 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 make very good use of open-ended resources, such as cardboard boxes, to encourage young children to talk and extend their communication and language skills.
- The manager and her deputy effectively monitor planning and assessment information to ensure it accurately reflects all children's skills, abilities and progress. This means that children's strengths and weaknesses are identified and intervention is sought at the earliest stage.
- Children are safeguarded well. This is because all staff implement policies and procedures effectively and fully understand their responsibility in sharing any concerns they may have regarding children's welfare.
- Parents are kept up to date with their child's progress and are supported to address their individual learning and development needs through effective partnerships with staff.

### It is not yet outstanding because

- Occasionally, group time activities for younger children are too long and do not always provide enough challenge for all children to extend their listening and attention skills.
- There is scope to improve access to some resources in the indoor environment accessed by younger children, in order to enrich their ability to make choices and direct their own play.

## 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 carried out a tour of the nursery.
- The inspector observed play and learning activities and spoke to children and staff in all rooms of the nursery.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation with the manager.  
The inspector carried out a meeting with the provider, manager and deputy manager and looked at and discussed a range of policies, procedures and documentation.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents spoken to on the day of inspection.

## Inspector

Nicola Jones

## Full report

### Information about the setting

Little Acorns (North East) Ltd was registered in 2001 and is run by a limited company. It is located in a residential area operating from a two-storey building in South Moor, Stanley, County Durham. The nursery serves the immediate locality and also the surrounding areas. It opens five days a week from 7.30am until 6pm, all year round. An out of school club runs from 7.30am until 9am and 3pm until 6pm, during term time holiday and full days are available in the school holidays. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 48 children in the early years age range. The nursery receives funding for the provision of free early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. The nursery supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. There are currently 10 staff working directly with children, all of whom have appropriate early years qualifications. One member of staff holds a qualification at level 2 and five hold qualifications at level 3. Three staff hold higher qualifications, including one with Qualified Teacher Status. The nursery receives support from the local authority. The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register.

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

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

- strengthen good teaching even further by ensuring all activities delivered at group time are sufficiently challenging and time limited, in order to enhance younger children's listening and attention skills
- extend ways to further enhance children's independence skills in the indoor environment accessed by two-year-old children, in order to enrich their ability to make choices and direct their own play.

## Inspection judgements

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

Staff provide a broad range of interesting and challenging experiences for children that meet their individual needs well. They collect good quality learning and development information from parents when children first begin attending the nursery. This is used well to inform on entry assessments and supports children's individual age and stage of development. The quality of teaching is consistently good and children make good progress as a result of attending the nursery. Staff are skilled in engaging children in activities that help them to learn. For example, very young babies are supported well when they reach out and grasp objects, such as rattles. Areas are well-planned and allow children maximum space to move and explore their surroundings, supporting their physical

development very well. Older children are highly motivated and thoroughly enjoy planned activities, such as 'play dough disco' to develop their hand and finger control. They watch carefully as staff model actions and use words, such as 'squash' and 'press' as they manipulate dough between their hands. As a result, children enhance their communication and physical skills and develop positive dispositions for learning. Staff support all children well as they play. They sit alongside them at tables and on the floor and help children to do what they are trying to do without taking over or directing. This enables children to play and explore their environment and maintain focus on their activities for periods of time. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are particularly well supported in the nursery. Staff work very well with external agencies, such as educational psychologists and speech and language therapy services, to support and meet children's needs. Individual education plans are drawn up, in consultation with parents, to identify and demonstrate how strategies are implemented by all those involved with the child. This means there is shared understanding, which supports this group of children to make progress based on their individual starting points.

Staff provide purposeful and developmentally appropriate activities to develop children's communication and language skills. They make very good use of open-ended resources, such as cardboard boxes, to encourage young children to talk. Children giggle and laugh as they peer through the holes of a large box and call out the names of their friends. They enjoy crawling inside and pull down the lid to create an enclosure and make comments, such as 'It's dark'. Staff support their growing vocabulary well and ask questions, such as 'What can you see?' to enable children to use language to express their thoughts and talk about their experiences. Staff have a good awareness of developing children's literacy skills. They are enthusiastic when singing nursery rhymes and songs and encourage children to use musical instruments to develop a sense of rhythm. Children join in with songs and enjoy using the drum to tap out the rhythmic beat. This provides a very good foundation for future literacy learning and supports children's readiness for school. Staff make, generally, good use of group time activities to extend children's learning. Older children listen attentively as they begin to learn songs in preparation for up and coming 'Mothers day' celebration events in nursery. They join in with words and sustain concentration well for the duration of the activity. However, occasionally, some group time activities carried out for younger children are too long and do not always provide enough challenge to enhance the listening and attention skills of all children. As a result, some children become bored and lose interest in the activity.

Children have individual learning journey files containing information collected from parents on entry to the setting, examples of children's work, observations and photographs as evidence of learning. This is tracked over time to demonstrate progress. Parents have access to this information, which keeps them informed of their child's progress and they are actively encouraged to share information about their child's learning at home. For example, parents spoken to on the day of inspection describe how they enjoy sharing what their child has done at home as this is built upon the next day in nursery. This means there is shared knowledge about children and a complete picture of children's learning and development is obtained.

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

Children, especially young babies, are able to form good relationships with caring staff, who meet their emotional and physical needs well. Children separate from their parents with ease and are welcomed into the friendly nursery environment where they are happy and enjoy what they are doing. Staff are highly skilled when supporting children who become upset when their parents leave. For example, children are given time to talk to their peers about resources, such as crayons, they have brought from home. This supports children's emotional well-being and enables them to talk openly to others about their experiences. Staff are enthusiastic and encourage children to explore their surroundings, use their imaginations and play with other children. As a result, they show good levels of confidence and are motivated to try new activities and experiences. Effective settling-in procedures are in place when children begin attending the nursery. They make a number of visits, based on their individual needs, before staying for the whole session. Good quality information is gathered from parents, such as, specific dietary needs, medication, routines and comforters. This ensures continuity in children's physical and emotional well-being. Children are well supported when they move rooms within the nursery. They make visits with the key person and all information is shared between parents and staff, maintaining continuity in care and learning for each child. Children are equally well-prepared emotionally when they transfer into school. For example, school teachers come to see children in nursery. Transition documents are completed and handed over to schools to ensure teachers are aware of each child's individual needs before they start.

Staff support children's independence skills, generally, well in the nursery. Children are encouraged to attend to their own personal needs, such as blowing their noses and place their tissues in the bin afterwards. Older children have access to a stimulating and well-resourced indoor environment, which supports their all-round development and independence skills well. They freely choose from a broad range of clearly labelled toys and equipment, which are organised effectively to enable children to see what is available to play with. However, there is scope to extend younger children's independence skills even further in the indoor environment, in order to enrich their ability to make choices and direct their own play. For example, by ensuring all resources, such as additional water play equipment, are fully accessible and children are able to begin to pour their own drinks at snack time. Staff give clear messages to children to ensure they are developing a good understanding of why it is important to have a healthy diet and gain an understanding of the need for physical exercise. For example, staff describe how eating fresh fruit 'makes you big and strong' and provide good role models by eating foods alongside children. Children are provided with fresh, healthy food in the nursery. This is cooked on the premises each day and children enjoy the social occasion of sitting together with staff in the dining area. Older children have a very good awareness of the changes that occur in the body when they carry out physical exercises in the 'den' area of the nursery. They make comments, such as 'It makes your blood flow quickly around your body' to demonstrate their understanding. Although, the nursery does not have an outdoor environment, very good use is made of facilities in the local area. Photographic evidence demonstrates how staff make effective use of the park, library, vets and local police station to enhance children's physical skills and knowledge of the world.

Staff involve children in safety procedures throughout the day. For example, they ensure all children hold the hand rail when moving up and down the numerous staircases located throughout the nursery. Children demonstrate safe practices as they play. For example, they hold scissors carefully when cutting out their paper 'medals' in preparation for a forthcoming sports event. Children cooperate well with each other and know what behaviour is acceptable in the nursery. This is because staff have agreed procedures outlining how to manage changes in children's behaviour and the rationale of this is shared with parents to maintain a joint approach. The manager and her deputy are proactive and review policies and procedures on a regular basis or when required. They provide additional support and guidance for the staff team if the need arises. For example, staff training is planned focusing on children with more complex behavioural needs.

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

The manager and her deputy in the nursery have a good understanding of the requirements to safeguard children. Following a recent incident they appropriately notified Ofsted and a full investigation took place into the circumstances of the alleged event. The manager found the allegation to be unsubstantiated, however, she took appropriate action to contact relevant personnel and review all associated policies and procedures. Additional training has also been sought to deepen staffs' understanding of keeping children safe and managing children with complex behavioural needs. Robust systems are in place to ensure all staff working directly with children hold appropriate qualifications, are suitable to fulfil the requirements of their role and have had appropriate checks carried out. As the designated lead for safeguarding, the manager and her deputy have a clear understanding of their role and ensure all staff are well versed in what to do should they have concerns about a child. This means that children are effectively safeguarded and their welfare is monitored closely. Children are protected further as ratios are maintained and they are supervised well at all times. There are clear and well-understood policies and procedures in place for assessing risks to children's safety. Staff ensure that all areas of the nursery are safe and secure at all times. All doors are locked and stair gates are closed securely at all times throughout the day. The manager is vigilant and addresses concerns immediately when they come to her attention. For example, on the day of inspection the manager noticed a small section of carpet, which had previously been taped down, had come loose. She acted swiftly and renewed the tape to ensure the carpet area remained safe for children to access. All other carpeted areas and storage cupboards in the nursery are well-maintained and are suitable for use with children.

The manager and her deputy lead a well-qualified and experienced staff team. They are deployed effectively and use their skills and expertise skilfully to support young children's learning and development. The manager has a good understanding of her role in monitoring the delivery of the educational programmes and maintains an overview of the continuous provision for children in the indoor and outdoor environments. She is well supported by her deputy and the provider to maintain an overview of the quality of teaching and learning provided. Effective systems are in place to monitor progress for each individual child or group of children attending. For example, the deputy completes

analysis of tracking documentation for each group of children in nursery. This ensures children's strengths and weaknesses are quickly identified and intervention is received at the earliest possible stage. This is further supported by effective supervision, induction and mentoring arrangements. This enables staff to discuss individual children's progress, address any issues and accurately identify training to support their own professional development, promoting the interests of children.

Self-evaluation takes into account the views of staff, children and their parents. Views are sought through regular staff meetings and one-to-one conversations with staff and children are observed regularly and their comments through discussion are noted. Parents speak to the manager, deputy and the staff team on a regular basis and provide written feedback on questionnaires. The manager and her staff team demonstrate a strong drive to improve the service they provide and have a clear improvement plan in place that supports children's achievements over time. For example, future developments include improvements to the 'den' area, which aim to enhance provision and further support children's physical development. Good partnerships with parents are in place and make a strong contribution to meeting children's needs. A range of opportunities are provided to invite parents into the nursery and share experiences with their children. For example, they join in with celebration events, such as 'Mothers day' and 'Fathers day'. Parents spoken to on the day of inspection describe how they value the opportunity to share in their child's experiences in nursery and speak highly of the service provided. Partnerships with external agencies are well-established and information received from services in the local community is well used. The manager and her deputy are proactive in establishing and maintaining contact with services, such as health visitors. This is echoed by health professionals, who speak highly of the support offered to children in the nursery. This ensures children and families get the help and support they need to address their individual needs and circumstances.

### **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>	EY103722
<b>Local authority</b>	Durham
<b>Inspection number</b>	957057
<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>	99
<b>Number of children on roll</b>	48
<b>Name of provider</b>	Little Acorns (North East) Ltd
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	17/02/2009
<b>Telephone number</b>	01207 299974

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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.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

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