

Little Acorns Day Nursery

c/o ASDA Distribution Centre, Staithes Road, Pattison Industrial Estate, District 8, Tyne and Wear, NE38 8NW

Inspection date	18/03/2014
Previous inspection date	03/01/2013

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		3
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		3

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision requires improvement

- Children make good progress. This is because staff skilfully plan and provide a wide variety of stimulating and interesting activities that inspire children's enthusiasm for learning.
- Children are well behaved and form positive relationships with adults and peers. They are encouraged and praised and their efforts are acknowledged appropriately.
- Children are effectively safeguarded because robust systems are in place to ensure all staff have a secure knowledge and understanding of child protection procedures, which ensures they act appropriately to safeguard children.

It is not yet good because

- Staff do not always record all accidents. This means that parents are not always notified of an accident occurring.
- The monitoring of staff is not yet robust enough to identify where improvements can be made to enable staff to further enhance their practice.
- Opportunities for children to develop their literacy and numeracy skills outdoors are not as effective as indoors, as there are fewer resources to promote the regular and purposeful use of letters, signs and symbols.

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 nursery in both indoor and outdoor spaces.
- The inspector looked at children's records, observation and assessment files, planning documentation and a selection of policies.
- The inspector spoke to the manager, staff and children throughout the inspection.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents and carers spoken to on the day and from their written feedback to the provider.
- The inspector discussed the provider's monitoring and evaluation procedures and plans for improvement.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation with the manager.

Inspector

Janet Fairhurst

Full report

Information about the setting

Little Acorns Day Nursery was registered in 1998 on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. It is situated in purpose built premises on the ASDA warehouse site in Washington and is one of a number of nurseries owned and managed by Little ACORNS Group Ltd. The nursery serves the local area and is accessible to all children. It operates from four base rooms and there is an enclosed area available for outdoor play.

The nursery employs 28 members of childcare staff. Of these, all hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 or above, including one with Early Years Professional Status. The nursery opens from Monday to Friday, all year round. Sessions are from 7.30am until 6pm. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 122 children attending who are in the early years age group. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

To meet the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage the provider must:

- ensure that a written record of all accidents is maintained and parents and carers informed on the same day, or as soon as reasonably practicable.

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

- develop further the systems for performance management, so that records of supervision identify solutions to address performance issues as they arise and are used for coaching and training to address any weakness in practice
- increase the amount of print and number signs outside to enhance older children's understanding that words have meaning and number recognition, in order to further support their good early literacy and mathematical skills.

Inspection judgements

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

Despite weaknesses in the provision regarding the safety and welfare of children, the quality of teaching is good and children are making secure progress in relation to their starting points. This is because staff interact well with all children and successfully support

them in developing the skills they need, in order to be effective learners, including being ready for school. Staff obtain information about children's starting points in their learning and development from parents. They use this information to build upon their learning. Effective systems of observation ensure that children are monitored in their development across the prime and specific areas of learning. Assessment is thorough and detailed, so that staff have the information they need to track children's progress and match activities precisely to their needs. A clear picture emerges and the planning reflects what the staff intend next, in order to reinforce new learning. This close attention to children's needs and motivating them is what drives the good progress they make. Parents are well informed about their children's progress and next steps for learning through regular discussions, development summaries, parents' drop-in sessions and displayed planning. Parents are actively encouraged to share their own observations of children's interests and new achievements, in order to enhance staffs' own observations and assessments of children.

The quality of teaching is good. Staff provide challenge for the children, while ensuring they are successful and this helps them to feel motivated. Children make good progress in developing their communication and language skills because staff take every opportunity to talk to them about what they are doing. Staff are effective in the way they question children and talk to them in detail about what they are doing. This deepens children's thinking and develops their language and communication skills well. For example, a group of older children experiment with objects that float and sink. Staff skilfully ask questions that encourage the children to talk about and predict which object will float or sink and why. Children are keen to express their thoughts, such as 'this one is heavy, it will sink'. The activity successfully develops children's thinking and language skills well and spurs them on to experiment further with objects, which they wish to test out themselves. On arrival, older children quickly find their name cards and demonstrate an increasing amount of control in holding a pencil and making marks as they attempt to record their name on the white board. Consequently, children develop good skills for their future learning. The pre-school room is rich in print and number signs, which is effective in supporting children's early literacy and mathematical skills. However, this is not extended to the outdoors to further strengthen the children's good literacy and numeracy skills while playing outside. Older children are able to share and develop their own ideas and interests. For example, they turn the mathematics area into a shop pretending to sell items. They are able to find numbers on the till and count how much money they have and work out if they have enough money to buy the items. The outdoor area promotes a good level and range of interests. During the inspection, children were excited to find small creatures under logs and are eager to show adults and each other the worms and spiders. Such activities help to promote children's sense of wonder and understanding by ensuring that creatures are kept safe.

Staff in the baby room are very attentive, so they meet the need of babies well. Babies who are becoming aware of their surroundings are stimulated by staff who maintain eye contact and model early words for them. They are attentive to their needs and listen carefully to children's responses. Through this, children are happy and their individual needs are well met. Younger toddlers are curious and keen to participate in activities on offer. For example, they have fun with staff as they attempt to make the animal noises and relish the experience of getting messy using glue as they enthusiastically spread it around the sheets of paper. This shows some of the characteristics of effective learning.

Babies and toddlers are very sociable and confident due to the caring support they receive. They happily investigate the toys and have stimulating opportunities to use their senses. For example, they discover the textures and properties of water, sand, jam and custard. They develop physical skills at the same time as they pull themselves up and walk around the low table. All children make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development and this underpins their good achievement. Older children are developing good learning skills and becoming confident in working together. They play well alongside one another and often collaborate in their construction play. For example, outside, a group of boys work together to collect as many foam bricks as they can negotiating who will push the wheelbarrow and who will collect the bricks. Children have daily access to the outside play area where they enthusiastically pursue energetic play and show great enjoyment in being physically active. They manoeuvre their scooters and bicycles skilfully and with ease around the pathway, taking care not to bump into others. Balance beams add challenge and the good level of support from staff, provides them with confidence to 'have a go'.

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

Children's safety and well-being is compromised by weaknesses regarding accident records. However, staff demonstrate a caring and positive attitude towards the children they care for. Children separate from their parents with ease and are welcomed into the friendly environment where they are happy and enjoy what they are doing. Children show by their words and actions that they feel safe and secure. They happily go to staff for comfort, reassurance and support and show a good sense of belonging. The flexible settling-in sessions offered to 'new' children helps them to settle and adjust at a pace that suits their needs and those of their families. Prior to children starting the nursery, parents complete an 'All about me' booklet, which helps staff to gain valuable information about each child's individual needs, care routines at home and family background. This enables them to find out about and celebrate each child's uniqueness and provide carefully tailored care. For example, parents are asked if there are any special ways to get their children to sleep and any comforters they have, what children like or do not like, things they are good at and things they may need help with. Staff working with very young children demonstrate a caring, loving and nurturing nature as they warmly interact with babies and toddlers during care routines and as they play. Transitions within the nursery or into other early years settings are effectively supported to foster children's continued sense of security. For example, close links are established with children's new key person, transition documents are completed and settling-in visits take place.

Accessible toys and activities means that children can make choices about what they would like to do and explore and develop their own ideas. This effectively fosters their independent learning and helps them to develop skills for future learning as they move onto school, through self-initiated play. Children are becoming increasingly independent as they manage their personal care and serve themselves at mealtimes. All children behave very well. Older children are learning to rely much less on adults, both in directing their own learning through play and in their ability to dress themselves to go outside to play. They concentrate for long periods of time on chosen activities, listen carefully and respond well to adult directions. For instance, when they hear the musical instrument being

tapped, they stop what they are doing and listen to what is being said. Children play happily together, sharing resources and taking turns as they have been taught to do. For example, each child in a small group playing together, took turns to play the various instruments.

Children are well nourished because they are provided with a good range of nutritious foods and a choice of fruits and vegetables. Mealtimes are social occasions as the children sit chatting to their friends, eating freshly prepared meals and snacks. Staff are clear about children's allergies or food preferences, which ensures children's needs are met and respected. Good procedures are in place to encourage appropriate hygiene practices, such as washing hands before eating and after using the toilet. This is extended by staff who provide good role models for the children. They follow effective hygiene procedures for nappy changing and in helping children to wipe their noses and dispose of their tissues hygienically. Staff provide good opportunities for children to be active through daily access to the outdoor area where they enjoy fresh air and are able to expend their energy. Children learn to take small risks and work out how to keep themselves and others safe. For example, they wait for other children to finish on the balance beams before they start and know that they must not throw sand at other children.

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

This inspection was prioritised following concerns being raised to Ofsted. These concerns related to children's safety and staff deployment, in particular the nappy changing arrangements and the frequency of accidents and accident records. The inspection found that staff deployment is effective with regard to nappy changing procedures and children are suitably supervised. However, the inspection found that very minor accidents that do not require any initial treatment are not recorded and on one occasion, staff failed to notify a parent that an accident had occurred. This is a breach of the safeguarding requirements of the Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage. This also relates to the requirements of the Childcare Register. Staff demonstrate a good awareness of child protection issues. All receive safeguarding training and are aware of the signs and symptoms of abuse. This is supported by a clear written policy, which means that staff have a good understanding of procedures to follow should they have a concern about a child in their care. In addition, a record of risk assessments is in place and staff complete daily visual checks of the premises. This ensures that any risks are identified and minimised to keep children safe from harm. There are effective procedures for recruiting staff and a thorough induction process. This ensures that all staff working with the children are suitable to do so and competent to fulfil their roles. Staff deployment and correct ratios means that children are well supervised by suitably qualified staff.

The manager demonstrates a good understanding of the responsibility to meet the learning and development requirements. Records of children's progress are monitored by the manager and her senior team. They analyse the information they collect on children's achievement to make sure that different groups are making equally rapid progress. Developmental trackers are monitored by the management team and they work closely with members of staff to highlight if further intervention is required. This ensures that

children receive any additional support they need to improve the learning and make progress. Staff receive six monthly appraisals to ensure they feel supported and able to share any concerns that they have. The manager and senior team carry out some observations of staff practice and this provides some useful insight into quality of practice. However, supervision records are not maintained to clearly show how discussions about the quality of practice enable the manager to coach or mentor staff and tackle any underperformance.

Partnerships with parents is good. Parents are well informed about their children's care and education on enrolment and during their time at the nursery. They are invited to 'drop in' and 'stay and play' sessions, which provide good opportunities for them to talk about their child's progress and development. Children's learning journals are easily accessible for them to view at anytime. This positive partnership with parents means that they feel valued and children benefit from the consistency of care provided. Parents speak highly of the nursery and how staff take time to share information and keep them updated. Their views are valued and taken into account when reviewing practice. For example, following parents' comments, the manager has reviewed the menus and now offers a more seasonal menu and has also introduced an afternoon snack. This helps parents to be fully involved with their children's learning and well-being. All staff are fully committed to their work and the service they provide. This is reflected in their enthusiasm and the enjoyment they demonstrate when interacting with the children. The recommendations from the previous inspection have been fully addressed. For example, children are given more opportunities to make the decisions with regard to whether they play indoor or outdoor. The manager and staff work together effectively to identify areas for development and prioritise targets for improvement. They constantly evaluate the environment and resources to ensure that they consistently meet the needs of children attending the nursery.

The Childcare Register

The requirements for the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are

**Not Met
(with
actions)**

The requirements for the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are

**Not Met
(with
actions)**

To meet the requirements of the Childcare Register the provider must:

- ensure that a record of all accidents is maintained (compulsory part of the Childcare Register).
- ensure that a record of all accidents is maintained (voluntary part of the Childcare Register).

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

Unique reference number	318602
Local authority	Sunderland
Inspection number	961244
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 17
Total number of places	98
Number of children on roll	122
Name of provider	Little Acorns Group Limited
Date of previous inspection	03/01/2013
Telephone number	01138 268376

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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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M1 2WD

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