

Little Acorns Nursery

Stubley Lane, Dronfield, Derbyshire, S18 1LS

Inspection date	27/08/2014
Previous inspection date	23/04/2013

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	4
	Previous inspection:	2
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		4
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		4
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		4

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision is inadequate

- Some practitioners have a poor understanding of how children learn. This means educational programmes for the youngest children are not matched to their needs and teaching is weak.
- Some practitioners do not understand how to use resources and reshape tasks to capture children's interests and promote their independent investigations. As a result, activities for the youngest children are often mundane and lack challenge.
- The youngest children do not always enjoy time in the outdoor area and some of them have their dummies for most of the day. This means practitioners are not promoting their overall development and well-being.
- Arrangements in place for performance management are not sufficient to ensure significant weaknesses in practice are identified. As a result, some children do not experience good quality interactions and teaching.

It has the following strengths

- Parents are welcomed into the setting and are kept informed about activities their children enjoy. This means they can promote their children's continuing learning at home.
- Children receive suitable levels of support during transitions and this ensures they are emotionally well prepared for the next stage in their learning.

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 the main playrooms and the outside area.
- The inspector conducted a joint observation with the manager.
- The inspector held meetings with the manager of the provision.
- The inspector looked at children's assessment records and planning documentation.
- The inspector checked evidence of suitability and qualifications of practitioners working with children, the provider's self-evaluation form and improvement plan.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents and carers spoken to on the day and from information included in the setting's own parent survey.

Inspector

Nicola Dickinson

Full report

Information about the setting

Little Acorns Nursery was registered in 2006 and is on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. It is situated on the ground floor of a business premises in the Dronfield area of Derbyshire. The nursery operates from two rooms and there is an enclosed area available for outdoor play. The nursery employs eight members of childcare staff. Of these, six hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3. The nursery opens Monday to Friday all year round, from 7.30am until 6pm. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 47 children on roll who are in the early years age group. The nursery provides funded early education for three- and four-year-olds. It supports children who speak English as an additional language.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- improve practitioners knowledge of how children learn so that they understand how resources can be used more effectively and activities can be reshaped, to capture children's interest and promote their independent investigations
- consider the individual needs, interests and stage of development of each child and use the information to plan challenging and enjoyable experiences for each child that stimulate and motivate them to learn
- ensure all children benefit from learning in the outdoor environment and their health and well-being is fully promoted, by making sure the youngest children enjoy time in the outdoor area each day
- improve arrangements for monitoring the performance of staff to ensure weaknesses in practice are identified and they receive appropriate training and support that helps them to develop high quality teaching that promotes children's good progress across all areas of learning.

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

- promote children's attempts at communication through spoken language more effectively, for example, by discouraging them from using their dummy while they are happily playing.

Inspection judgements

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

Some practitioners have a poor understanding of how to promote children's learning and development. They obtain starting points in children's learning from parents so they have information about children's attainment when they enter the setting. They also gather information about children's interests. They complete short observations of children's play and use current guidance documents to identify next steps in learning for children. However, practitioners who work with the youngest children do not understand how to use the information they collect to plan educational programmes that match children's individual needs. As a result, activities lack challenge and do not motivate and stimulate them to learn. For example, practitioners do not know that the purpose of an activity using coloured lights is to promote children's sensory development. Consequently, the activity has no focus and it does not capture children's interest. Practitioners do not support the youngest children's independent play because they do not understand how to promote their learning through effective teaching and the skilful use of resources. As a result, they do not reshape tasks to maintain children's interest, and children's choice of resources is mundane. Therefore, they move from one to another showing little interest. For instance, some children who prefer learning in the outdoor environment do not always have access to the outside area so they cannot enjoy the learning experiences it offers. Overall, the youngest children develop communication and language skills through everyday conversations and by singing simple songs and rhymes. However, they often use their dummies when they are happily playing. Practitioners do not recognise that this hinders children's attempts at communication through spoken language and could affect their development. Nevertheless, assessments that track their progress to date show they are meeting the expected milestones for their age.

In contrast, practitioners who work with older children take into account children's skills and interests to plan educational programmes that target their learning needs. They also make good use of spontaneous opportunities to promote their learning. For example, when children find a caterpillar in the nursery garden, practitioners use it to plan a wide range of activities that capture children's interest and stimulate them to learn. This supports children's understanding of the world by exploring its life cycle. Practitioners promote early literacy by sharing stories. Skilful practitioners encourage children to tell the story themselves and use puppets effectively to support their understanding. They skilfully use questioning to help them share their ideas and knowledge and help them to make connections in their learning. For example, they are asked to consider why they think the food the caterpillar ate might have given him tummy ache. They also share their ideas when they choose a range of media to make a collage of their story for the nursery wall. Practitioners promote children's mathematical skills through activities, such as baking, where they begin to recognise larger numbers and learn about weight and measure. This means the group of older children develop the skills they will need for the next stage in their learning, which is usually school.

Despite the weaknesses in practice, the key-person system supports the two-way flow of information with parents. Practitioners complete observations of children's learning and

share them with parents. Assessments, including progress checks for children between the ages of two and three years, are completed and shared with parents during regular parents' evenings. As a result, parents know what stage their children are at in their development. They are also invited into the nursery to experience their children's learning environment and some of the activities they have enjoyed while in the setting. This means they can support their children's progress at home. They comment that they are happy with their children's progress and the activities provided.

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

The key-person system is sufficient to help ensure children's care needs are met. However, some of their learning needs are not met effectively because some practitioners have a poor understanding of how to promote children's learning and development. Parents know who their child's key person is and children's care routines are shared with them. This ensures children with specific care needs are appropriately supported. The key-person system is effective in supporting secure relationships with children and building partnerships with parents. Babies receive consistency in their care routines. Staff are deployed appropriately and this means children are generally settled because they are being cared for by familiar adults. Sleep routines reflect those children enjoy at home. Older children sleep in a quiet area of the main playroom and this means they are supervised at all times by a practitioner. Older children are encouraged to rest after their lunch. Those who do not want to sleep enjoy a short session where they can relax while watching a favourite programme on the television.

Children are supervised appropriately during their play. Practitioners demonstrate they have a suitable understanding of how to assess risk and they take steps to keep children safe. They complete daily checks of the premises and equipment to make sure it is safe for children to use. Older children play outdoors daily, however, the youngest children do not have the same opportunities. Therefore, they do not benefit from the large space in which to play in the fresh air and test their physical skills, so their well-being is not sufficiently supported. Nevertheless, older children are taught how to assess risks for themselves when using outdoor play equipment and they learn how to use small tools, such as scissors, safely. They learn about road safety during trips to places of interest. Visitors, such as paramedics and local police officers, come into the setting and talk to children about how to keep themselves safe while out in the community. As a result, they are learning strategies for keeping themselves safe.

Practitioners are suitable role models. Children receive consistent messages which support their developing understanding of right and wrong, and children's behaviour in the setting is good. By using simple, age-appropriate explanations, practitioners teach children to share, resolve disputes and play cooperatively. This supports them in developing secure relationships with their peers. However, the weaknesses in practitioners' understanding of how children learn mean that planned learning is not effective enough to securely promote all children's learning in the prime areas. This impacts on how well children can progress with their personal, social and emotional development. Despite this, practitioners demonstrate they understand children's need for additional emotional support during transitions. Short introductory sessions, which they enjoy with their parents, help them to

settle and provide some continuity in their care.

Children receive suitable levels of support to get them ready for school. This means they are emotionally prepared when the time comes for them to move on. Key persons take them to visit the school they are moving on to and teachers visit them in the nursery. This helps them to understand school routines and they become familiar with teachers, so when the time comes for them to move on to the next stage in their learning, they are welcomed by an adult they know. Children enjoy a variety of freshly cooked, nutritious meals. Menus are shared with parents and they are asked for their ideas. Children's individual dietary needs are catered for. Discussions at mealtimes help children to understand how a balanced diet keeps them healthy. For example, practitioners discuss with them how eating some of their vegetables help to keep their muscles strong. Children develop self-care skills as they learn to dress themselves, wash their hands and develop independence in using the toilet. As a result, they can attend to their own personal care needs when they move on to school.

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

This inspection took place following a notification from the provider that raised concerns about the safety of children, staff deployment and supervision. Ofsted carried out an unannounced visit to look at whether the setting was meeting the Early Years Foundation Stage requirements with regard to safeguarding policy, in particular the requirement to have and implement a policy. Procedures for safeguarding children were looked at, along with arrangements for ensuring children are supervised, in particular staffing arrangements that meet the needs of all children and ensure their safety. Following the visit, Ofsted issued a welfare requirements notice that asked the provider to ensure that a daily record of the names of the children being cared for on the premises, and their hours of attendance, is maintained accurately, to ensure that children are adequately supervised, and to decide how best to deploy staff to ensure children's needs are met. These actions have been checked at this inspection and the provider has taken appropriate action to ensure children's attendance is recorded, including the times they arrive and leave. Records show that required adult-to-child ratios are maintained. The provider has reviewed staff deployment to make sure practitioners are organised effectively to ensure children's care needs are met. The provider has also implemented measures to ensure children are supervised appropriately at all times. This ensures children are kept safe.

Robust recruitment procedures ensure practitioners are suitable to work with children. Disclosure and Barring Service checks are obtained for all new practitioners. Induction for new practitioners includes essential policies and procedures so that they fully understand their roles and responsibilities for keeping children safe. For example, the procedure for reporting concerns about children, and the use of mobile phones and cameras, is explained to them. The majority of practitioners have completed safeguarding training and they demonstrate they can identify signs and symptoms of abuse. This means any concerns about children are accurately recorded. The key-person system is robust and sufficient to promote secure relationships with parents and, as a result, information about children's well-being is shared. This helps to ensure children are protected. Children are

kept safe during their play because practitioners complete risk assessments to minimise risks and ensure the premises and equipment are safe and suitable for them to use. They conduct risk assessments of places children visit, such as the local park, and appropriate safety measures are put in place, which contribute to them being kept safe during trips. Six practitioners hold a current first-aid certificate, which means they can give appropriate treatment if there is an accident to a child in their care. Accidents and medications administered to children are recorded in line with the legal requirements. Policies and procedures are shared with parents. This means they understand the service on offer to them.

Partnerships with the local schools are established. These ensure information about children's progress and development is shared to ensure children enjoy continuity when they move into school. Practitioners complete observations and assessments of children's progress, and the manager reviews them to identify gaps in children's learning. The manager understands where to seek support for children who are not meeting their expected targets. This ensures early intervention strategies can be put in place to support children who are not meeting their milestones. Partnerships with parents are embedded and they are provided with several ways to be involved in their child's learning. Self-evaluation offers little information with regard to the provider's assessment of the service or any action plans to address weaknesses and drive improvement. However, weaknesses in practice identified at previous inspections have been successfully addressed. Although the manager completes appraisals to monitor practitioners' performance, these are not effective in identifying all weaknesses. She has not identified that some practitioners have a poor understanding of how children learn. She has also not recognised that some practitioners do not deliver well-planned, purposeful activities that promote children's learning and that the quality of teaching is poor. This means the manager and provider do not have an accurate overview of the nursery's strengths or gaps in the provision, and as a consequence, the nursery is not improving to benefit the children who attend.

The Childcare Register

The requirements for the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are	Met
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The requirements for the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are	Met
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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. We re-inspect nurseries and pre-schools judged as requires improvement within 12 months of the date of 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		There were no children present at the time of the inspection. The inspection judgement is that the provider continues to meet the requirements for registration.
Not met		There were no children present at the time of the inspection. 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	EY332334
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	987040
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 17
Total number of places	40
Number of children on roll	47
Name of provider	Indra Kumari Athi
Date of previous inspection	23/04/2013
Telephone number	01246 299750

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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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