

Little Acorns Day Nursery

Courtyard House, Dicconson Terrace, Wigan, WN1 2AA

Inspection date 29/08/2014
Previous inspection date 27/02/2014

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		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 have a good knowledge of how children learn and provide a varied and imaginative educational programme, with precise assessment and planning for individual children. As a result, children make consistently good progress in their learning and development in relation to their starting points.
- The well-embedded key-person system helps children to form close emotional attachments as staff skilfully support them in their play. Consequently, children feel safe and secure in the nursery and their all-round well-being is effectively promoted.
- Staff have a very good knowledge and understanding of their responsibility to safeguard children, which is successfully translated into practice. This means that children are well protected and can play and learn in a safe environment.
- Partnerships with parents, other early years providers and external professionals are very good and make a significant contribution to meeting children's individual needs.

It is not yet outstanding because

- There are some missed opportunities during play and daily activities to further enhance children's good mathematical skills with regard to learning about patterns and comparing size, length and weight.
- Opportunities for children to make even stronger links between home and the nursery are not yet fully extended.

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 children's activities in all playrooms and the outdoor environment.
- The inspector held discussions with the manager and talked to children, staff and key persons throughout the inspection.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation with the manager.
- The inspector looked at various documents, including a sample of policies and procedures, children's records, evidence of the suitability and qualifications of staff and recruitment procedures.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents spoken to on the day of the inspection.

Inspector

Julie Kelly

Full report

Information about the setting

Little Acorns Day Nursery was registered in 2013 on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. It is situated in a two-storey converted school in Wigan and is managed by a private provider. The nursery serves the local area and is accessible to all children. There is an enclosed area available for outdoor play. The nursery employs 18 members of staff, who work directly with the children. Of whom, two hold an early years qualification at level 5, two hold an early years qualification at level 4 and 11 hold an early years qualification at level 3. There are two members of staff, who hold an early years qualification at level 2. The nursery opens from Monday to Friday for 51 weeks of the year. Sessions are from 7.30am until 6pm and children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 128 children on roll, of these, 63 are in the early years age group. The nursery also provides care for children before and after school and during school holidays. It receives funding for the provision of free early years education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. It supports children, who speak English as an additional language and children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The nursery is a member of the National Day Nurseries Association. It receives support from the local authority.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- enhance children's already good mathematical skills even further, for example, by providing an extensive range of opportunities during play and daily routines for them to learn about and identify patterns and to compare size, length and weight
- provide an extensive range of real objects and resources, such as food packaging, fruit and vegetables and cooking utensils from different cultures that reflect children's home life to further enhance their ability to make connections between home and the nursery.

Inspection judgements

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

Children's enthusiasm for learning and the levels to which they succeed, are enhanced by staff, who have a good knowledge of the Early Years Foundation Stage and a secure understanding of how they learn. The indoor environment is well organised into areas of continuous provision linked to the seven areas of learning and children learn through well-planned, purposeful and challenging activities. As a result, they make consistently good progress in relation to their starting points. Staff are enthusiastic and this is reflected in the motivation and enthusiasm of children as they learn and play. For example, during a

singing session, babies bounce up and down and move their bodies from side to side with excitement. Children are provided with a wide range of interesting and good quality resources to promote their natural curiosity and develop their exploratory skills. For example, they investigate the properties of sand, water, dough and paint and create cards with a broad variety of collage materials. This means that children learn different ways of expressing themselves and their creative skills develop well. However, there are fewer opportunities for children to access an extensive range of real objects and resources to further enhance their ability to make connections between home and the nursery.

Staff place a high priority on helping children to acquire communication and language skills and supporting their physical, personal, social and emotional development. As a result, children gain the skills, abilities and attitudes that prepare them well for the next stage in their learning and eventually, school. For example, staff teach children to share and take turns and cooperate with each other as they play. They demonstrate their learning as they play harmoniously together, collaborate with each other and swap resources. For example, when children want to use a piece of equipment that another child has, they ask 'Can I have a turn after you?' Babies and children demonstrate high levels of confidence and independence as they freely move around the environment and make choices about what they want to do. Staff provide skilful and sensitive support to help children to achieve, which effectively builds their self-esteem. Children develop very good communication and language skills because staff consistently role model language and introduce new words to extend their vocabulary. Staff use a running commentary to describe what children are doing and skilfully use open-ended questioning techniques to teach them how to communicate their thoughts and ideas. They successfully support babies' communication and language development because they intuitively tune in to the individual sounds, words and gestures that they use to communicate. Babies thoroughly enjoy one-to-one attention as they shout out sounds and babble and excitedly wait in anticipation for a response from the member of staff. Training for staff in this area of development has had a huge impact in improving children's communication and language skills. For example, toddlers participate in daily 'toddler talk' sessions and 'Island Time' where a specific activity is planned to promote their listening and attention skills and encourage them to talk. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, who need additional help in this area of learning, are effectively supported through close partnership working with parents and external professionals. Furthermore, staff effectively use pictures, props, puppets, symbols and visual aids to reinforce their communication and language skills. Children, who speak English as an additional language, are well supported by staff, who find out and use key words and phrases in their home language to successfully support their understanding of English. Staff provide children with a wide variety of opportunities to develop their large muscle control and coordination both indoors and outdoors. For example, children ride wheeled toys, climb up and down steps and over the wooden bridge and crawl through tunnels. Babies have the freedom and space indoors to crawl, stretch, move and reach. Staff encourage children to develop good mathematical skills as they encourage them to count how many cakes they have made. They successfully introduce them to simple addition as they say, 'You have two cakes and two cakes, so how many have you got altogether?' However, staff do not always make the most of opportunities during children's play and daily routines to further enhance their mathematical development, such as learning about and making patterns and comparing size, length and weight.

Staff make good use of accurate and precise observations across all areas of learning to help them to plan for children's individual learning and effectively monitor their progress. As a result, gaps in learning are quickly identified and effective support put in place, including the involvement of external professionals if necessary. This means that no child is disadvantaged and all children can achieve their full potential. Parents are encouraged to be actively involved in the initial assessment using the 'All about me' booklet, which provides staff with a detailed picture of children's starting points. Staff plan for the development needs of each child based on their unique interests, which has a significant impact on their progress. The environment is enhanced through the implementation of resources that meet children's needs and as a result, they consistently demonstrate the characteristics of effective learning. Children's learning records are maintained to a good standard and contain observations, ongoing assessments and photographs to evidence their learning and progress. Partnerships with parents are very strong and make a significant contribution to meeting all children's needs. Staff value parents' input and share information about how they can help their child's learning through simple activities at home. The parents' notice board contains a wealth of information about how children learn and includes tips for supporting their communication and language development. Staff encourage parents to borrow story sacks, which contain books, masks and puppets to share with their children. Parents are given information about their children's learning through verbal feedback, communication books, regular written summaries of their progress and opportunities to review their learning journey records at anytime.

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

The effective and well-established key-person system means that children form secure attachments and their emotional well-being is consistently supported. Babies are looked after by caring staff, who intuitively understand and respond to their physical and emotional needs. Children are cuddled and comforted if upset and spend quality time with their key person, engaging in activities, such as small group discussions and 'looking and listening' sessions. This enables children to feel safe and secure within the nursery, which consequently, has a significant impact on their learning and development. Staff encourage children to do things for themselves and praise them for their achievements, which successfully promotes their self-esteem and confidence and makes them feel valued as individuals. Children say 'well done' to each other all the time, which they learn from excellent role modelling by staff. Consequently, their physical and emotional well-being is effectively promoted. Children learn about safety because staff teach them the boundaries of the nursery, such as walking indoors and picking up toys, so that they do not fall. They learn about road safety rules when out walking, such as using the pelican crossing, also, visits from the police service teaches them about 'stranger danger'. As a result, children gain a secure awareness of how to keep themselves safe.

Staff greet and welcome children and their parents into the nursery, which ensures that they feel valued and cared for and that relationships with parents are strong. The arrangements for supporting children as they move from home to the nursery are carefully planned with parents from the point of entry. Staff gather information about children's likes, dislikes, routines and favourite activities from parents on entry. As a result, children

very quickly adapt to the environment and daily routines and confidently form new friendships. Effective systems are in place to support children as they move rooms, such as discussions with new key persons, sharing their developmental progress reports and settling-in visits. Therefore, children experience continuity and consistency of care and learning. Children learn about expected levels of behaviour from the positive role modelling of staff and from each other. Very young children are kind and caring towards each other, they know to use 'kind hands' to help their friends and not to hurt anyone. They share and take turns independently and help each other, for example, they hold a template for each other to draw around. Children's behaviour is very good because staff provide them with clear and consistent boundaries and help them to learn to manage their own feelings. They are involved in nursery rules and know to be kind to each other. Staff teach children to understand how their behaviour affects others and think of ways they can help them to feel better and what they can do to resolve the situation.

All children demonstrate high levels of independence and competently manage their own care needs. For example, babies feed themselves, toddlers access and put on and take off their aprons and pre-school children serve their own meals. These skills support children as they move onto school. Staff role model good hygiene practices and teach children the importance of washing their hands before eating and after using the bathroom. Children learn about the importance of a healthy diet as staff talk to them about foods that make their bodies grow. They are provided with a wide variety of healthy snacks and nutritious meals and are encouraged to try new foods and textures. Children's learning is further enhanced as they plant and grow tomatoes, potatoes, strawberries and runner beans in the nursery garden, which they then harvest, prepare, cook and eat. Furthermore, children collect freshly laid eggs from the chickens that are kept in an enclosure in the outdoor area, which they then use to make omelettes. Daily access to outdoors and regular walks in the local community means that children benefit from fresh air and exercise. Cosy areas within the indoor environment give babies and children opportunities to rest and relax and play quietly. As a result, children's health and good hygiene are successfully promoted, which in turn has a positive impact on their physical and emotional well-being.

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

Staff have a good knowledge and understanding of how to protect and safeguard all children and policies and procedures are known by all staff and implemented consistently. They have attended safeguarding training and this continues to be updated to ensure they strengthen their knowledge, understanding and skills in this area. Staff are fully aware of their safeguarding responsibilities and know what to do and who to contact in the event of a cause for concern. An effective and detailed set of risk assessments, which have recently been added to and reviewed and daily checks of the indoor and outdoor environment ensure that children can learn and play in a safe environment. The vigilance of staff, consistent supervision of children and widespread security systems, such as keypad locks on doors, ensure that children are consistently protected from harm. A secure password system is in place for unknown adults collecting children and verification of the identity of visitors ensures that children are well kept safe.

The manager takes overall responsibility for overseeing the educational programme and ensuring its effective implementation. Furthermore, she oversees and regularly checks children's learning records to ensure that they are up to date. The manager monitors observations and tracking to ensure that they accurately reflect children's learning and progress. There are highly effective systems in place for tracking groups of children, such as boys and girls and those, who speak English as an additional language. Data is gathered and shared with the local authority and once analysed, graphs are then produced, so that staff can quickly identify any areas of learning where achievements are low. This demonstrates how the nursery is working to narrow the achievement gap for children, who are at risk of falling behind or those who are vulnerable. The manager uses her knowledge, experience and skills to lead the staff team and continually improve practice. Through robust support systems, such as role modelling, mentoring and coaching, staff are expertly guided to achieve the high aspirations of the manager and the provider, who plays an active role in the nursery. Staff are passionate and 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. Self-evaluation processes are good and managers and staff have a shared vision of improvements for the future to make sure that the quality they have achieved since the last inspection continues to be sustained. For example, there are detailed action plans in place that effectively target priorities for improvement. Staff constantly evaluate their practice and the environment to ensure that they continue to improve, as they strive to provide the best possible care and education for all children. The provider, together with the manager and staff, has worked incredibly hard since the last inspection to improve practice and all actions and recommendations have been fully addressed. This is particularly evident in the revised observation, planning and assessment system, which staff talk about confidently and demonstrate a secure knowledge and understanding of the process. Consequently, learning outcomes for children have significantly improved.

Staff fully understand that working closely with parents has a significant impact on children's learning and development. Partnerships with parents are strong. Children's learning journey records are shared with them and they access a wealth of information in the form of displays, photographs and regular newsletters. A great emphasis is placed on daily face-to-face communications, achieved through the meet-and-greet open door policy. Staff make good links with local schools and share developmental records, so that children are well supported when the time comes for them to move on. Teachers are invited to come into nursery to talk to key persons and meet the children prior to them starting school. This means that teachers are fully aware of children's current and future learning needs to provide consistency and continuity of care and learning for each individual child. Parents are highly complimentary about the nursery and comment that children develop well and make good progress in their learning. They comment that the nursery is stimulating and exciting, yet provides a welcoming, homely environment where children feel safe and secure in the care of friendly, approachable staff.

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. 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	EY467501
Local authority	Wigan
Inspection number	968598
Type of provision	Full-time provision
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 17
Total number of places	88
Number of children on roll	128
Name of provider	Annette Mercer
Date of previous inspection	27/02/2014
Telephone number	01942 732 821

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance '*Complaints procedure: raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted*', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

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.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2012

