

Little Acorns Pre-school

Purford Green School, Purford Green, Harlow, Essex, CM18 6HP

Inspection date	12/09/2014
Previous inspection date	12/01/2010

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

- Children are well protected and cared for in a safe, calm, learning environment. They are happy and show a high degree of confidence because of the strong bonds they have formed with the staff. Children's independence is well promoted.
- Children enjoy a wide range of stimulating and engaging activities. They are always involved in fruitful activity and learn through play as staff engage with them, using good teaching strategies to extend and promote their skills.
- The key-person system is effective in engaging parents in their children's education. Parents appreciate the quality of care and education provided for their children. Good partnerships with external agencies mean that children are well supported in their learning and development.
- Systems for monitoring staff performance are good, as a result, staff professional development is well focussed and constantly improves outcomes for children.

It is not yet outstanding because

- The outdoor area is currently under development. At this time, not all areas of learning are fully promoted to encourage children to develop a full range of skills during outdoor play.
- Not all staff consistently use effective questioning to maximise children's already very good language and communication skills.

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 held discussions with the deputy manager.
- The inspector observed play, learning activities and spoke to children and staff.
- The inspector sampled a range of policies and procedures relating to safeguarding, medication, staff qualifications, planning and assessment.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation with the deputy manager.
- The inspector held discussions with parents present on the day.

Inspector

Vicky Turner

Full report

Information about the setting

Little Acorns Pre-school was registered in 1999 and is on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. It is situated in purpose built premises in the Purford Green area of Harlow and is managed by a private provider. The nursery serves the local area and is accessible to all children. It operates from a building on Purford Green school site and there are two enclosed areas available for outdoor play. The pre-school employs seven members of childcare staff. Of these, all hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 and above. The pre-school opens Monday to Friday, during school term time only. Sessions are from 9am until 12pm and 12.15pm until 3.15pm. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 48 children attending who are in the early years age group. The pre-school provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. It supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language and children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The setting is now part of the Purford Green School Academy.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- improve the outdoor provision even further to provide more learning opportunities for play and exploration across all areas of learning
- improve the questioning skills of all staff in order to extend children's language, communication and critical thinking skills to the optimum levels.

Inspection judgements

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

Effective systems for observation and assessment enable staff to plan suitable activities for the children. Children's progress is tracked on their 'developmental wheel' which indicates where there are gaps in children's learning and development. This information is used to plan the next steps in the children's learning. Children's learning journeys are well documented and show that children make steady progress towards the early learning goals. Parents have regular access to their children's learning journeys and have the opportunity to comment and contribute to their children's profiles. Children happily engage in a range of interesting activities such as, role play, dressing up, cutting and sticking and sorting activities. Staff provide many opportunities for children to communicate. For example, whole group discussion times are an opportunity for children to talk about their personal experiences. Children participate in an interactive story session which they thoroughly enjoy. This is well read and children join in at different parts of the story. Children are eager to contribute and talk about the pictures. Effective questioning enables

children to think about and discuss characters' feelings and predict what the characters might say. Older children are confident to ask questions. Opportunities for children to develop an understanding of basic phonics are also in place. Children link sounds to letters, which encourages their early literacy skills. Children draw both inside and outdoors, developing their fine motor skills. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported and make steady progress. Parents are pleased with the specialist support that their children receive. The statutory progress check for children aged between two and three years is firmly in place and shared with parents.

Children's mathematical skills are developing as they count, sort and match shapes. Children enjoy playing in the waterfall water tray, filling containers and engaging in imaginative play as they fetch sea animals to enhance their games. They pump water and enjoy watching it flow to different levels of the tray. Staff are sensitive and know when to join in children's play but on rare occasions, some staff do not seize the opportunity to fully question, extend children's vocabulary and challenge their thinking to the optimum level. Children problem-solve when the water stops running through the rubber tubing. They try to investigate and make suggestions as to what might be blocking the tube. For example, a leaf or a snake. They suggest how they might unblock it. There are adequate opportunities for children to develop their creativity through painting, play dough, messy play and music sessions. Children select tools and materials for junk modelling. Monthly visits from the music man provide children with the opportunity to explore sounds from different musical instruments and to sing in unison. Children excitedly experiment with a range of percussion instruments. Children enjoy banging on the large drum to accompany their singing. Children learn about living things. For example, they plant flowers and sweet peas, and make a wormery. Children now have access to an adequate range of information and communication technology equipment which supports their learning. For example, hand held devices, a camera for taking their own photos and programmable toys.

Children are well prepared for the next stage of their education because of the good transition arrangements that exist. Children visit their new classrooms and meet their new teachers. Teachers also visit children at the pre-school. The transition book helps children familiarise themselves with their new class teacher, activities and their new classroom. Parents have the opportunity to share their concerns with the pre-school staff who discuss this with the school. Children are developing appropriate skills to help them learn and develop, ready for the next stage of their education. Relevant information about children's learning and development is shared with the receiving schools which support the transition process further.

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

Children are warmly welcomed by the staff as they are signed in on arrival at the pre-school. They are well cared for and protected in this stimulating learning environment. Space is used well and good quality resources are well organised so that they are accessible to all the children. As a result, children move around the room confidently, making choices and moving and handling resources independently. The youngest children have been at the setting for only a week and have settled in well because of the strong,

secure relationships they are developing with the staff. Children behave well because staff work well as a team to reinforce and acknowledge positive behaviour. Children know what is expected. Praise and rewards are used well to motivate the children. There are effective strategies in place to support those children who have difficulty managing their behaviour.

Staff are highly effective in promoting children's independence within the daily routine. For example, children help themselves to snacks and pour their own drinks. They access resources independently and help tidy up the room. Children are encouraged to have a go and try new things. They demonstrate positive attitudes to learning and are eager to get involved. Children adopt good hygiene practices as they wash their hands before snacks. Gentle reminders from the staff and picture prompts support new children with the hand washing routines. The dentist teaches them how to care for their teeth and children each receive a new toothbrush. They learn how to keep themselves safe and to use equipment safely. For example, staff teach the youngest children how to use the slide safely. Older children are reminded that they are not to stand on the slide. Visitors to the setting such as a police officer, help children learn how to stay safe.

Children enjoy a healthy snack of breadsticks, fruit and a drink of water or milk. Children's dietary and medical needs are observed when preparing snacks. The outdoors provide adequate opportunities for children to run around, climb, crawl, balance and slide. Consequently, their physical skills are well promoted. However, opportunities for children to develop skills in other areas of learning such as, literacy or creativity are not yet as prominent. The manager is currently working on plans to enhance the outdoor area, so that this environment becomes a richer source for children's learning. The key-person system is effective in sharing information with parents regarding their child's learning and development. Strong links with the school and good transition arrangements mean that the move to primary school is a smooth one. Staff prepare children for the move by talking to them about the changes that might occur and by sharing the transition book with them. As a result, children are self-assured and emotionally ready for the challenges ahead.

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

Arrangements for safeguarding children are good. Staff have a good understanding of the safeguarding procedures and are vigilant so children are well protected. All staff understand their responsibility to protect children in their care and know how to report concerns they may have about a child. The premises are secure and visitors are checked before entering the pre-school. Daily risk assessment of the premises and equipment ensure that children can play safely. There are good procedures in place to check staffs' suitability to work with the children. Some members of staff hold current paediatric first-aid certificates so children are well cared for should they have an accident. Other members of staff await the next training session with the school. All staff are trained in the use of the epi-pen.

The owner who is also the manager, provides sound leadership for an effective team of dedicated staff. Systems for monitoring the educational programmes are effective. Staff

performance is managed well and the manager is proactive in identifying when staff need additional training. Annual appraisals and regular supervision meetings are well documented and inform accurate targets for continued staff professional development. As a result, staff are more confident in their role particularly with regards to safeguarding children. There are effective systems in place to monitor children's progress so management have a precise overview of progress. As a result, gaps are easily identified and appropriate support is put in place to support those children with additional needs. The manager and staff team are committed to developing and enhancing the pre-school. They have successfully addressed the recommendations from the last inspection and identified areas for future improvement. For example, the setting has identified the outdoors as an area for improvement. It now has a second play area which has been recently fenced off, providing more space for the children to play. There are plans to include a nature garden, a sensory garden and a music area.

Good partnership with parents means that parents are fully involved in their children's education. Daily discussions with parents, the daily diary and the pre-school's website keeps parents well informed of the pre-school's activities and their children's progress. Parent share information about their children when they first start the nursery. They attend at least two parents' meetings a year and an information meeting. Open days offer parents the opportunity to come into the pre-school and engage with their children in their chosen activities. Parents' views are sought through questionnaires and during information sessions. Parents are appreciative of the care and education provided, particularly for those children needing additional support. They comment that the staff are approachable, very supportive, understanding and willing to help. Strong partnerships with the school enable children to make a smooth transition to their next stage in their learning. Good specialist support and advice enable staff to plan effectively to meet children's additional needs.

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	EY296220
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	861573
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 17
Total number of places	24
Number of children on roll	48
Name of provider	Linda White
Date of previous inspection	12/01/2010
Telephone number	01279 428396 or 01279 813842

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

