

Little Acorns Pre School

Warners End Community Centre, Stoneycroft, Warners End, HEMEL HEMPSTEAD,
Hertfordshire, HP1 3QG



Inspection date

4 June 2015

Previous inspection date

1 February 2011

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

Summary of key findings for parents

This provision is good

- Staff promote children's independence skills very well. Children are encouraged to serve their own food at snack time, peel their own fruit and help themselves to art supplies, such as paint. This gives them a sense of achievement and high self-esteem.
- Staff are knowledgeable about their safeguarding responsibilities. This includes the importance of keeping children safe from the inappropriate use of mobile phones. The manager has recently attended safeguarding training to refresh her knowledge. This has a positive impact on children's care because she uses the information to implement procedures that protect their safety and welfare.
- Staff promote children's language development well. They talk to them throughout their play and ask them questions about their past experiences. Staff repeat words to younger children to extend their vocabulary. This helps children to develop good speaking skills in readiness for future learning, such as at school.
- Partnerships with parents are strong. Staff encourage parents to share their observations of children and give them suggestions about how they can support children's next steps in learning at home. This promotes good continuity of learning. Parents are keen to share their positive opinions about the pre-school and are very happy with the care that staff provide.

It is not yet outstanding because:

- On occasion, staff do not always encourage children to practise their early writing skills.
- There are times when staff do not consistently use effective strategies or organise small-group activities successfully, in order to promote children's positive behaviour.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- enhance opportunities for children to write their own names, such as on their artwork so that they are able to practise their early writing skills from a young age
- review the organisation of small-group activities and maximise the use of strategies, such as using egg timers, to enhance children's understanding of how to take turns so that they consistently learn about the good behaviour that is expected from them.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed children taking part in a range of activities and spoke with staff and children at appropriate times throughout the inspection.
- The inspector conducted a joint observation with the manager and held a meeting with her.
- The inspector checked evidence of Disclosure and Barring Service checks and the suitability, qualifications and training of staff.
- The inspector looked at a range of policies, procedures, children's assessments and the pre-school's action plans.
- The inspector spoke to some parents during the inspection and has taken account of their views.

Inspector

Katherine Hurst

Inspection findings

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend. This is good

The quality of teaching is good. Staff plan a range of interesting activities that engage children and promote their learning. For example, children mix colours together using paint. Staff talk to them about the colours they are making and visual aids remind children what paints they need to use to get their desired colour. They complete precise assessments about children's learning, which demonstrate the good progress that children are making. Staff make good use of the garden and children are able to choose whether they play inside or outdoors. This allows those who prefer to learn outside to thrive. Staff promote some opportunities for children to practise making marks. For example, they provide a writing table with various resources, a tray of sand and paints. However, when children create a piece of work, such as a painting, staff do not always encourage them to write their own name on it. As a result, children are not consistently supported to develop their early writing skills from a young age.

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

Staff support children to be emotionally prepared for their next stage of learning. For example, they invite nursery and Reception teachers to visit the pre-school. This allows children to become familiar with their new teacher and make the move with confidence. Staff plan interesting activities involving food and talk to children about the importance of not eating it once it has gone mouldy or stale. This helps children to develop an understanding of how they can contribute to their good health. Staff promote positive behaviour. However, they have yet to fully consider the most successful way to organise small-group activities. There are times when the group sizes are too large, which results in some negative behaviour occurring. In addition, staff do not always use effective strategies to encourage children to share toys. For example, they do not promote the use of resources, such as an egg timer to show children when it will be their turn.

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

The manager is knowledgeable about the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and implements them well. She regularly evaluates the quality of the pre-school. There are action plans in place to drive improvement, which demonstrates an ongoing commitment to providing good quality teaching and care. The manager has correctly identified that all staff would benefit from training linked to promoting children's positive behaviour. Staff work closely with other professionals, in order to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. This means that children's individual needs are well met. The manager supervises staff effectively and completes regular supervision meetings with them. This gives staff the opportunity to discuss any concerns they may have and to request specific training. The manager talks to staff about areas of practice that require development and offers support with children's assessments. She ensures that a wide range of interesting activities are provided to effectively promote children's learning.

Setting details

Unique reference number	129363
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	874830
Type of provision	Full-time provision
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	2 - 5
Total number of places	24
Number of children on roll	40
Name of provider	Warners End Neighbourhood Association Committee
Date of previous inspection	1 February 2011
Telephone number	01442 266732

Little Acorns Pre School was registered in 1992. The pre-school employs seven members of childcare staff. Of these, all staff hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3, including one at level 4. The pre-school opens from Monday to Friday, during term-time only. Sessions are from 9.15am until 12.15pm, with an optional lunch club operating from 12.15pm until 1pm. Afternoon sessions are from 12.45pm until 2.45pm on Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. 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.

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