

Little Acorns Pre-School

The Community Room, Stukeley Meadows Primary School, Wertheim Way, Stukeley Meadows, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire, PE29 6UH



Inspection date

18 June 2015

Previous inspection date

4 November 2010

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

- The manager, staff and committee members work well together to identify areas for training and therefore, improve the provision. This has resulted in an enthusiastic staff team who use their varied skills and qualifications effectively to ensure all children make good progress in their learning.
- Staff use their good teaching skills to promote children's language skills particularly well. They engage with them during small group activities, encouraging children to express their ideas and talk about their experiences.
- Children who speak English as an additional language benefit from strong and informed support from staff. They feel valued because their home languages are known and used.
- Staff have established a good level of communication with parents so that they feel involved and well informed about their children's learning and development.
- Staff attend child protection training and have a good understanding of safeguarding procedures. They supervise the children as they play and ensure the premises are safe and secure. As a result, children are protected.

It is not yet outstanding because:

- Not all large group activities are tailored well enough to hold children's interest and some are not well timed, so that they distract children from sustained, self-chosen play.
- At times, children are not able to access the outdoor areas, this occasionally leads to some escalation of noise in the room. Additionally, learning opportunities for those children who prefer to be outside are not maximised.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- review the planning and timing of large group activities to enhance children's learning experiences, for example, by implementing a more flexible timetable
- make better use of the outdoor environment, for example, by enabling children to access the area freely, to benefit those who prefer outdoor learning and exuberant play.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed the children during their activities indoors and outside.
- The inspector spoke with staff and managers about how they plan for children's learning, and looked at children's development records.
- The inspector spoke to a number of parents and looked at surveys and comments.
- A range of documents were looked at including children's registration details, evidence of suitability checks for staff and committee members, training records and the setting's self-evaluation.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation of a teaching activity with the manager.

Inspector

Veronica Sharpe

Inspection findings

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

Staff provide a broad selection of activities that stimulate children's interest and promote their good learning. They engage well with children to motivate them and encourage their thinking skills. For example, they ask children blowing bubbles how large or small the bubbles are, and why they blow away in the wind. Children and staff enthusiastically sing songs together and act out the words of action songs. Staff help children develop their writing skills by providing a broad range of pens and pencils in all areas of children's play. Children's writings and drawings are displayed to promote their self-esteem. Children learn about numbers in practical ways, for example, as they count the worms in the wormery, or discover how many boys and girls are in pre-school. Staff have secure systems to assess and evaluate children's learning and development. They carry out regular reviews and share their findings with parents and others involved in the children's care. Well-qualified staff care for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities to effectively meet their individual needs. Whole group activities do not consistently meet the needs of younger children and those less able to sit and listen. Additionally, the timing of these does not always take into account those children who are focused on other learning activities.

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

Children build secure attachments to staff because settling-in arrangements are flexible and effective. Staff meet with parents and collect detailed information on children's initial routines and interests. This helps to ensure children's individual needs are met well from the outset. Children have good relationships with each other and are learning to share and take turns. They are encouraged to carry out simple tasks, such as preparing their snacks, which develops their independence and a sense of responsibility. Staff teach children about the benefits of healthy foods and plan music and movement sessions to promote enjoyable physical activity. Children have periods of outdoor play each day. However, at times, access to outside is defined by routines, which occasionally leads to some exuberant play inside. Additionally, learning opportunities for those children who learn best outdoors are not optimised.

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

Managers, staff and committee work effectively as a team to fulfil their responsibilities. The well-qualified manager routinely reviews staff practice and meets with them regularly to identify areas for development. Training is given a high priority and new ideas are shared well. For example, recent training on communication and language skills has developed staff consistency in talking to, and questioning, children effectively, and identifying any areas where additional support is needed. Recruitment procedures ensure anyone in contact with children is safe and suitable to do so. Good working relationships with teachers in the school helps to support children as they prepare for their move into Reception classes.

Setting details

Unique reference number	221640
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	865943
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	53
Name of provider	Little Acorns Pre-School Committee
Date of previous inspection	4 November 2010
Telephone number	07594 477652

Little Acorns Pre-School opened in 1995 and is managed by a voluntary committee. It operates from community rooms alongside the primary school in Stukeley Meadows, Cambridgeshire. The pre-school opens from 9am to 3pm each weekday during school term times. There are nine staff who work directly with the children. The manager holds an early years qualification at level 5, five staff hold qualifications at level 3 and one is working towards level 2. The pre-school provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. It has children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language on roll.

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