

Little Acorns Pre-School

South Charlton Village Hall, Alnwick, Northumberland, NE66 2JU



Inspection date

6 October 2015

Previous inspection date

15 February 2011

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
Effectiveness of the leadership and management		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Outstanding	1
Personal development, behaviour and welfare		Outstanding	1
Outcomes for children		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents

This provision is outstanding

- Teaching is outstanding. Children's natural curiosity and exploratory instincts are very well fostered, as their surroundings supply endlessly fascinating challenges. Children develop a strong impulse to learn and exceptional skills for their future learning.
- Staff make regular, accurate assessments of what children know and can do, and activities are carefully planned. These focus precisely on children's interests, and rapidly build their skills and knowledge.
- The pre-school leaders are committed to providing high quality care and inspirational learning for children. They are highly motivated and work exceptionally well together, creating a secure, safe and wonderful learning environment for children. Self-evaluation processes actively contribute to sustaining the highly effective provision and the outstanding service they provide.
- Staff work exceptionally well with parents and are very successful in engaging them in their children's learning. Parents are highly complimentary about the service provided. They value the excellent advice, feedback and support they receive, and comment how much their children enjoy attending.
- Staff develop exceptionally strong and positive relationships with children. This promotes their excellent sense of security and emotional well-being which means they form highly positive attachments and show great motivation in their learning.
- The behaviour of children is outstanding. Staff are exceptionally consistent in their routines, management of behaviour and in their demonstration at all times of courtesy and consideration for the feelings of others. Children emulate this behaviour and behave exceptionally well at all times.
- Children's management of their own safety is impressive. They are skilled at measuring the risks for themselves and others to make sure they stay safe.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- continue to explore professional development opportunities to sustain excellence in practice and teaching skills.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed the quality of teaching during activities indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact this has on children's learning.
- The inspector completed a joint observation with the pre-school leader.
- The inspector held a meeting with pre-school leaders and the nominated person. She looked at relevant documentation, such as the pre-school's self-evaluation and evidence of the suitability of staff working in the pre-school.
- The inspector spoke to a small selection of parents during the inspection and took account of their views.

Inspector

Janet Fairhurst

Inspection findings

Effectiveness of the leadership and management is outstanding

Robust recruitment arrangements are in place. The induction and probationary periods give leaders time to assess the skills of new staff. Ongoing supervision and appraisals identify staff's professional development needs. Safeguarding is highly effective as the staff prioritise children's safety and know how to respond to any concerns about their welfare. The pre-school leaders astutely identify the strengths and priorities for improvement, and the impact of teaching on children's care, learning and development. As part of this, they have identified further training to help them enhance and continuously build upon children's already excellent communication and language development. The pre-school forms very successful links with local schools in order to support children's future move on to school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is outstanding

The well-qualified staff have an excellent knowledge of how children learn, and provide rich, varied and imaginative experiences that engage and motivate children to learn. The staff have high expectations and their skilled questioning encourage children to investigate for themselves. Children are inspired to achieve by the enabling approach of all staff. Children spend almost all their time choosing, creating and doing their own activities. This contributes strongly to the development of excellent communication, teamwork and problem-solving skills. The exceptional level of challenge provided by the adventurous and highly stimulating environment enables children to explore and extend their own capabilities within safe and supervised surroundings. This helps to empower children to try new experiences. Children express huge satisfaction when they create dens, or manage to loop rope over the tree branches, activities they clearly find enjoyable yet demanding. The teaching of early reading and writing skills is highly effective. For example, children copy words to use in their shop, and make marks using sticks. Children sequence and record their stories and are eager to share them with visitors and friends. Early mathematical skills are weaved seamlessly through children's play; whether it be through counting conkers, comparing lengths of rope, or finding shapes they recognise in the world around them.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare are outstanding

Staff use their considerable expertise to teach children safe behaviours. Children recognise and identify the possible dangers outdoors through their danger detective discussions. This strongly contributes to children's very good skills in assessing and managing the risks they want to take. For example, children know that they must take care when the logs are wet and slippery, and not to eat berries from the trees. Regardless of the weather conditions, children dress appropriately and venture eagerly outside. Here children have excellent opportunities to gain first-hand experiences of life and growth, and endless opportunities for creativity and imagination; improved fitness and physical development.

Outcomes for children are outstanding

All children make outstanding progress given their starting points. Their evident self-assurance prepares them extremely well for the next stage of their education.

Setting details

Unique reference number	301790
Local authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	855004
Type of provision	Sessional provision
Day care type	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 4
Total number of places	26
Number of children on roll	11
Name of provider	Little Acorns Pre-School Committee
Date of previous inspection	15 February 2011
Telephone number	07761 063824

Little Acorns Pre-School was registered since 2000. The pre-school employs two members of staff. Both hold an appropriate early years qualification at level 3. The pre-school opens Tuesday and Friday, during term time only. Sessions are from 9am until 12.45pm. The pre-school provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

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