

Little Acorns Childcare Ltd

34 Sheep Hill Lane, Clayton-le-Woods, Chorley, Lancashire, PR6 7JH



Inspection date

20 November 2015

Previous inspection date

5 June 2013

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	Inadequate	4
	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
Effectiveness of the leadership and management		Inadequate	4
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Inadequate	4
Personal development, behaviour and welfare		Inadequate	4
Outcomes for children		Inadequate	4

Summary of key findings for parents

This provision is inadequate

- The professional development and supervision of staff does not focus enough on improving their personal effectiveness in teaching. Weaknesses in the self-evaluation process contribute to the management team's poor prioritising of areas that need improving. Managers have failed to implement the necessary improvements identified at the last inspection.
- There are inconsistencies in the quality of children's experiences. Not all staff consider children's individual needs and stages of development to plan appropriately challenging experiences.
- Not all staff engage in appropriate hygiene practices to prevent the spread of infection.
- Routines for two-year-old children do not consistently promote their well-being, learning and development.
- Assessments are not always up to date and accurate. Therefore, staff do not always understand children's needs in order to appropriately shape their learning experiences. Assessments of children's progress between the age of two and three years are not consistently shared with parents, and when necessary, other professionals.
- Information gained from assessments is not always used to address children's learning and development needs. This is because identified gaps in children's learning are not consistently reduced. As a result, some children fail to make good enough progress.

It has the following strengths

- Parents inform staff about their children's interests and are kept informed regarding their day at the nursery. A variety of effective strategies are used to ensure parents are informed about their child's experiences. Parents speak highly of the care provided.
- The quality of teaching and learning for pre-school aged children is good.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

To meet the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and the Childcare Register the provider must:

	Due Date
■ ensure good hygiene practices are followed to promote the good health of children attending the nursery and prevent the spread of infection	18/12/2015
■ improve the supervision of staff to ensure all staff receive support, coaching and training and consistently promote the interests of children	18/12/2015
■ ensure routines promote children's personal, social and emotional well-being	18/12/2015
■ ensure all staff fully understand the development of children and use this information to provide appropriate experiences to consistently promote children's learning and development	18/12/2015
■ provide parents and/or carers with a written summary of their child's development in the prime areas when the child is between two and three years old, which must identify the child's strengths, and any areas where the child's progress is less than expected	11/12/2015
■ ensure that assessments are sufficiently rigorous to identify children's progress from their starting points, so that staff understand children's needs and can plan activities to shape their learning so that they make good progress	04/12/2015
■ ensure that information gained from assessments is used to identify and narrow gaps in children's learning and development in partnership with parents and if necessary, other professionals.	04/12/2015

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

- develop the use of self-evaluation and reflective practice to identify the nursery's strengths and weaknesses, in order to inform accurate priorities for improvement and foster a culture of continuous improvement.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed the quality of teaching during activities and assessed the impact this has on children's learning.
- The inspector completed a joint observation with the manager.
- The inspector looked at children's assessment records, planning documentation and the nursery's written documentation.
- The inspector checked evidence of the suitability and qualifications of staff working with children, and the provider's self-evaluation form.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents spoken to in the day.

Inspector

Jacqueline Midgley

Inspection findings

Effectiveness of the leadership and management is inadequate

The management team does not accurately identify significant areas of weakness. They have failed to improve on areas of weakness identified during the previous inspection. As a result, there are a number of breaches of the statutory requirements. Managers carry out observations of staff's performance, but these do not focus enough on how staff assess and promote children's learning. This means that feedback does not help staff to evaluate their practice in order to improve the quality of teaching. The systems for checking and reviewing what is working and what needs improvement are not yet rigorous enough to identify how to progress in order to drive improvement. Most staff hold relevant qualifications and are encouraged to attend training to enhance their knowledge, including safeguarding. Staff have a good understanding of child protection procedures and how to protect and safeguard children. However, poor hygiene practices mean children are not always protected from the spread of infection. This potentially puts them at risk. Assessments are not always consistent or accurate. They are not used well to understand all children's needs and plan appropriate experiences to support their learning and development. When gaps are identified in children's learning and development, staff do not consistently plan experiences to close those gaps. They do not consistently share assessments with parents, or seek advice or intervention from other professionals, in order to meet the learning and development needs of all children.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inadequate

The quality of teaching and learning for children differs across the nursery. The learning experiences of pre-school aged children are good. However, teaching in some other rooms within the nursery is not always tailored to support children's individual needs and abilities. This is because not all staff consider children's individual learning needs and their stages of development. Assessments are not robust enough. Not all staff recognise children's progress, understand their needs and plan appropriate activities, or seek intervention if necessary. Staff do not always plan appropriate experiences to support all children's learning and development. For example, planning for older babies is sometimes inappropriate because it lacks challenge. This is because staff are concerned with filling gaps in written assessments, rather than addressing children's current learning needs. Staff interaction with some two-year-old children is poor, and there are many missed opportunities to support their learning and development. This limits the progress some children make. This is particularly evident for children whose language skills are not yet at the typical levels expected for their age. Some staff do not have a clear understanding of child development and are not sharply focused on each child's needs. As a result, some staff do not plan effectively and consistently to support all children's learning and development. Therefore, there are significant variations in the learning of different groups of children.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare are inadequate

Staff do not always engage in suitable hygiene practices. On the day of the inspection there were inadequate hygiene practices observed in three of the four rooms. This potentially places children at risk from the spread of infection. Staff did not wash babies'

hands after they had played outdoors with mud and bark. Babies then played with malleable dough, which quickly became visibly dirty. This dirty dough was dropped on the floor, then passed between children who each put it in their mouths, and in some cases, smeared it with nasal fluid. Toddlers are not always supported to wash their hands prior to mealtimes. Cutlery dropped on the floor is not always cleaned prior to use. Staff do not always follow the manufacturer's instructions when using products to clean up bodily fluids and sanitise surfaces. Routines do not always support children well. For example, two-year-old children's learning is abruptly interrupted for mealtimes and they are required to sit at the table and wait too long. Limited interaction means that their personal, social and emotional development is not well supported during this social time. Children with communication difficulties are not consistently well aided to develop their talking skills, in order to alleviate their frustration. Staff focus on managing what they perceive as poor behaviour. As a result, two-year-old children are not always engaged, their play is interrupted and they wait too long. In the pre-school room, mealtimes are well organised, and children enjoy relaxed social interaction. Their independence and social skills are well supported. Relevant information is obtained from parents to ensure staff are aware of children's changing health and medical needs. In the pre-school and baby rooms, staff engage in effective care practices that support children's confidence and physical and emotional well-being.

Outcomes for children are inadequate

The progress made by children is too inconsistent. Staff do not always support all children to create firm foundations in their learning. Early intervention is not consistently sought in order to narrow gaps in children's learning. This means that not all children make good enough progress from their starting points. As a result, not all children are well prepared for the next stage in their learning.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY136994
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	1028347
Type of provision	Full-time provision
Day care type	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 4
Total number of places	55
Number of children on roll	94
Name of provider	Little Acorns Community Nursery Ltd
Date of previous inspection	5 June 2013
Telephone number	01772 696288

Little Acorns Childcare Ltd was registered in 2002. The nursery employs 17 members of childcare staff. Of these, 14 hold appropriate early years qualifications ranging between level 3 to level 5, and a further two hold Qualified Teacher Status. The nursery opens from Monday to Friday for 51 weeks per year. Sessions are from 7.30am until 6pm. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

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