

# Little Acorns

Acorns Playgroup, Evershot Village Hall, The Common, Evershot,  
Dorchester, Dorset DT2 0JY



<b>Inspection date</b>	19 September 2018
Previous inspection date	18 September 2017

<b>The quality and standards of the early years provision</b>	<b>This inspection:</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Effectiveness of leadership and management		Good	2
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Good	2
Personal development, behaviour and welfare		Good	2
Outcomes for children		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents

### The provision is good

- The management team has supported staff well to make improvements and develop their skills since the last inspection. For example, staff work well as a team and have improved the ways that they promote specific activities, such as simple science and cooking, to support children's learning more effectively.
- Staff provide a broad range of purposeful play activities that motivates children's interest in learning well. Children make good progress with their learning and development.
- Children are happy and emotionally secure in the setting. They respond positively to the friendly and reassuring approach staff give, and settle quickly to play.
- Staff promote children's physical well-being effectively. For example, children eagerly join in an action song and attempt to touch their heads, shoulders, knees and toes.

### It is not yet outstanding because:

- Although staff track children's achievements, they do not monitor these as well as possible to help them identify children's next steps of development more precisely, and consistently support their progress across all areas of learning.
- Staff do not consistently organise changes in daily routines and activities effectively to reduce disruptions to children's self-chosen play.
- Staff miss some opportunities to promote all aspects of children's learning more effectively in the garden area, to support those who learn best outdoors as well as possible.

## What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- strengthen systems for monitoring children's achievements to assess and support their ongoing progress consistently and more precisely in all areas of their learning
- strengthen the organisation of changes in routines to reduce disruption to children's play and enable them to complete their self-chosen activities to their own satisfaction
- make more use of play resources in the outdoor areas to promote all areas of learning more consistently.

### Inspection activities

- The inspector observed children's interactions in play indoors and outdoors, and discussed their development with staff.
- The inspector viewed documentation, such as operational policies, procedures and required records, including those for evidence of suitability of staff and committee members.
- The inspector completed a joint observation of an activity with the manager and discussed children's learning and development.
- The inspector took into account the spoken and written views of parents.
- The inspector had discussions with the management team, including about evaluation, recruitment and employment procedures, and how staff make ongoing improvements.

**Inspector**  
Mary Daniel

## Inspection findings

### Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

Safeguarding is effective. The management team supports staff well to understand their responsibilities to protect children's welfare. Staff know whom to contact if any concerns arise. The management team actively involves staff to evaluate practice to make ongoing improvements. For example, they have changed the layout of the indoor play area to encourage children's interest and use of the mathematical and home-play toys. Staff have also reviewed the planning systems. For instance, they now focus more on providing activities to support children's learning through their more-immediate interests and engage them well in play. Staff form good relationships with parents. They keep parents, and other providers that children attend, well informed of activities to promote continuity for children's care and learning.

### Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

Staff encourage children's imaginary play and literacy skills well. For example, children develop an exciting game about firefighters and then listen attentively to a story about a fire engine. Children like to 'write' down orders from staff for food and cook pretend meals, such as 'spicy chicken and broccoli'. Staff promote children's mathematical awareness effectively. For instance, children talk about the 'big' or 'small' pieces of play dough they use to make their models. Children start to match numbers to quantities, such as when counting how many arms, legs or eyes they have.

### Personal development, behaviour and welfare are good

Staff work well with parents to help settle children in happily. For instance, they find out about the toys children like and make sure these are available on their arrival. Children behave well. Staff act as good role models and help children to develop positive self-esteem. For instance, they praise children often for their efforts to be kind and helpful. Staff support children well to gain awareness of healthy foods. For instance, children concentrate well when helping staff to peel boiled eggs and like making foods, such as fruit kebabs or cheese quiche. Staff actively encourage children's physical control and balance skills. For example, children like to hop like a frog or crawl like a lizard, and practise simple yoga poses. They develop positive attitudes to exercise. Older and younger children show great determination pushing their ride-on toys around outdoors.

### Outcomes for children are good

Children gain a wide range of skills that helps them prepare for their move to school. Older children often use prediction in their games. For example, they push different sized cars down a slope and tell staff which might go more slowly or quickly. Children develop good independence skills. For instance, younger children attempt to put their wellington boots on themselves. Older children find their all-weather suits and learn how to zip these up before going outdoors. Children gain confidence and start to initiate their own games or happily seek others to join them.

## Setting details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	EY281575
<b>Local authority</b>	Dorset
<b>Inspection number</b>	10057064
<b>Type of provision</b>	Full day care
<b>Registers</b>	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
<b>Day care type</b>	Childcare on non-domestic premises
<b>Age range of children</b>	2 - 5
<b>Total number of places</b>	26
<b>Number of children on roll</b>	10
<b>Name of registered person</b>	Little Acorns Playgroup (Evershot) Committee
<b>Registered person unique reference number</b>	RP901866
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	18 September 2017
<b>Telephone number</b>	07985 435 958

Little Acorns opened in 1984 and re-registered at the current premises in 2004. The setting operates on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 8.45am until 2.45pm and on Thursdays from 8.45am until 12.45pm, during term time only. The setting receives funding to provide free early education for three- and four-year-old children. The parent committee employs five members of staff. Of these, one member of staff holds an early years qualification at level 6, one holds Qualified Teacher Status, one holds a qualification at level 3 and two hold a qualification at level 2.

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