

Inspection of Little Acorns Pre-School

South Charlton Village Hall, Alnwick, Northumberland NE66 2JU

Inspection date:

13 December 2019

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Outstanding

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is outstanding

Children's experiences and achievements in this pre-school are exceptional. Leaders have extremely high expectations that contribute to children's remarkable abilities. They have expert knowledge of how young children learn. Leaders use this extremely well to help children to build rapidly on what they know and can do. Teaching matches children's needs precisely. Activities are meticulously planned, exciting and motivating. Children are incredibly eager to take part and become absorbed in their learning. Staff have a high regard for the benefits of outdoor learning. Children spend much of their time in the pre-school's woodland area. They seize opportunities to explore and develop excellent knowledge of the natural world. For example, they excitedly examine footprints left by animals overnight.

Parents are highly complimentary about the pre-school. They work very closely with staff and have an in-depth knowledge about what their children are learning. They say the wonderful experiences that children have are so thrilling that they become etched in their memories. Children's exemplary behaviour shows that they feel safe and secure. They are extremely kind and considerate to others. This is demonstrated, for example, when they invite others to join them at snack time and help a friend who falls over.

What does the early years setting do well and what does it need to do better?

- The pre-school has an unhurried atmosphere where children are given lots of time and plentiful opportunities to learn through their play. Staff provide an excellent balance of adult-led activities and the freedom for children to lead and develop their self-chosen activities and games. This contributes to children's remarkable confidence in their abilities and their evident love of learning.
- Teaching is inspirational. Staff expertly weave learning opportunities into every part of the children's day, embracing their interests and inciting their curiosity. Children show delight and wonder as they play. This contributes to their excellent skills, knowledge and their motivation to learn more.
- Children remember what they learn and extend it during their independent play. For example, staff teach them about silhouettes during a matching game. Children then use their new knowledge while looking at shadows and shapes.
- Children are highly articulate. Staff's highly skilful interactions help them to develop a wide and rich vocabulary. They bring books to life. For example, following a story, they encourage children to think of different ways to rescue a toy rabbit from a tree in the woodland. Children recall parts of the book and work together to work out how to reach it. They search for things in the wood to stand on and reach up for the rabbit. They show excellent problem-solving skills and cooperation.
- Staff are committed to ongoing professional development, which helps to build

even further on their expertise. They rigorously evaluate the impact of their teaching. For example, they record video clips of activities with children to help them to assess their interactions and children's involvement. Staff's drive for continuous improvement is relentless.

- Children are exceptionally self-sufficient and very keen to do things for themselves. They manage their self-care needs with minimal help.
- Staff foster children's individual personalities and experiences extremely well. They provide very well-thought-out resources and age-appropriate activities to teach children about people and communities beyond their own rural location.
- Children have an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves safe. For example, they take on the role of 'danger detectives' when they help staff to assess risks. They fully understand boundaries and rules for good and safe behaviour and the reasons for these.
- Staff are excellent role models. They, and children, treat one another with great respect and have remarkably good manners. Children develop friendships and learn to understand and manage their feelings and those of others.
- Healthy lifestyles are promoted exceptionally well. For example, staff provide a lunch box for each child that indicates how much of each food group children need. This helps to ensure meals are highly nutritious and well balanced. Children take part in rigorous exercise daily and explain how it helps their heart and lungs to get stronger.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Children's safety and well-being are prioritised in the pre-school. Staff teach children to be resilient and confident to speak out about their own worries and concerns. Frequent and in-depth professional development opportunities contribute to staff's secure and up-to-date knowledge of child protection procedures. Policies and procedures to safeguard children are shared with parents. Staff understand their role in keeping children safe and know what to do if they are concerned about a child's welfare. Robust arrangements, such as regular checks and well-established routines, are in place to help to promote children's safety in the pre-school.

Setting details

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| Unique reference number | 301790 |
| Local authority | Northumberland |
| Inspection number | 10131548 |
| Type of provision | Childcare on non-domestic premises |
| Registers | Early Years Register |
| Day care type | Sessional day care |
| Age range of children | 2 to 3 |
| Total number of places | 12 |
| Number of children on roll | 10 |
| Name of registered person | Little Acorns Pre-School Committee |
| Registered person unique reference number | RP903962 |
| Telephone number | 07761063824 |
| Date of previous inspection | 6 October 2015 |

Information about this early years setting

Little Acorns Pre-School registered in 2000. The pre-school employs three members of staff who all hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3. The pre-school opens Thursday 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.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Clare Wilkins

Inspection activities

- Leaders showed the inspector around the indoor and outdoor areas where children play and learn. They talked about how they observe children, assess their development and use their findings to plan for their future learning.
- The inspector observed staff's teaching during indoor and outdoor activities and assessed the impact on children's learning and development.
- One of the leaders observed and evaluated an activity alongside the inspector.
- The inspector talked to staff and children at appropriate times during the inspection. She also spoke to a group of parents and took account of their views.
- The leaders discussed leadership and management arrangements with the inspector. The inspector looked at relevant documents, such as evidence of the suitability checks carried out on staff and committee members.

We carried out this inspection under sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of provision that is registered on the Early Years Register. The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and care, known as the early years foundation stage.

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