

Inspection of Little Acorns

Hurworth Primary School, Westfield Drive, Hurworth, DARLINGTON, County Durham DL2 2ET

Inspection date: 23 January 2020

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Staff are well qualified and experienced. They show enthusiasm and know how to help children learn through fun, exciting activities. Children are keen and eager to join in with experiences. They develop particularly good language skills and show confidence as they discuss and share ideas. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are effectively supported by key staff who have high expectations. Staff consistently work on targets to help children develop their physical skills. For example, they help them to walk to the lunch hall rather than using a pushchair. Children show they feel happy and safe in the nursery. They are confident to ask for help if they need it and benefit from staff's regular praise.

Staff consistently evaluate their practice and consider how they can prepare the indoor and outdoor areas to reflect children's interests. For example, staff enhance the dough table following their observations from the morning session. Children show enjoyment as they use dough to make cakes. They develop their mathematical skills as they count candles and discuss their age. The manager and staff team have developed very good partnerships with the primary school on site. They work together to help children prepare to start school and develop the necessary skills. For example, staff support children to be aware of behavioural boundaries and expectations. Children's behaviour is positive.

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

- Staff plan exciting activities for children that help them to develop their understanding of other traditions, people and places around the world. For example, children enjoy learning about the story of Chinese New Year. Staff extend children's learning as they ask them to recall the main events of the story and use the props to retell this in their group. Children develop very good literacy skills and learn new vocabulary rapidly. For example, they learn who the Emperor is and what they do.
- Staff provide children with a range of opportunities to build on their experiences and prepare them for life in Britain. For example, the manager invites visitors in, such as a music teacher, football coach and bike instructor, to help children develop new skills. In addition, staff encourage parents to come in and talk about their lives. For example, one parent spoke about being a midwife and others demonstrated playing a musical instrument. However, staff need to further develop the ways they collect information about all children when they first join the nursery to ensure they are aware of children's prior achievements.
- The manager and staff have worked hard to develop their partnership working with parents. They regularly gather feedback from them and respond to their requests. For example, children's journals are more accessible to parents so they can become involved in their children's ongoing learning. Parents provide

positive feedback about the nursery and are very happy with the care their children receive.

- Children have developed secure bonds with their key person and the staff team. Staff know how to meet their care needs effectively, and prioritise their emotional well-being and safety. For example, staff provide one-to-one support for children with SEND during lunchtime. They ensure that children can all sit together and enjoy the social aspect of mealtimes.
- Children are encouraged to develop independence and self-confidence. Staff praise them as they try to put on their coats and fasten their zips. Children count others in the group at snack time and show skill in using knives to butter their crackers. Some children show an understanding of germs and why they should wash their hands before eating meals. However, staff do not consistently support children to follow good hygiene practices when they use the potty.
- Staff have opportunities to discuss their professional development requirements and reflect on their practice. For example, staff access training to help them develop children's literacy and numeracy skills in preparation for starting school.
- The manager provides robust supervision meetings for staff and ensures their health and well-being are a priority. Staff are happy in their roles and feel supported by their team. For example, leaders provide mentoring support to newer staff and help them complete observations of children's learning.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The manager provides regular opportunities for staff to refresh their understanding of how to keep children safe. Staff confidently discuss the procedures for child protection and know how to report any concerns about children's welfare. They demonstrate an awareness of how to respond to wider safeguarding issues, such as radicalisation and domestic violence. Children are encouraged to learn how to stay safe. For example, they know they need to put helmets on before they ride on bicycles outdoors. The manager completes specific risk assessments to provide support to children with complex care needs. In addition, this helps to ensure that staff stay safe when performing moving and handling tasks.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- enhance ways to gather detailed information about children on entry from all parents and other settings involved to help staff know about children's prior achievements
- reflect on the toilet facilities for children, particularly those who use the potty, to ensure that the best hygiene practices are followed when children take a more active part in their own self-care.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY438010
Local authority	Darlington
Inspection number	10131621
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children	2 to 4
Total number of places	36
Number of children on roll	53
Name of registered person	Baker, Elizabeth Jane
Registered person unique reference number	RP903246
Telephone number	07896318103
Date of previous inspection	26 January 2016

Information about this early years setting

Little Acorns registered in 2011 and operates within the Hurworth Primary School site in Darlington. The setting employs nine members of childcare staff. Of these, all hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 or above, including the manager and two other members of childcare staff who hold qualified teacher status. The setting opens Monday to Friday from 8am until 6pm during school term time. It is also open Monday to Friday from 8am until 6pm during school holidays at parental request. The setting provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Michelle Lorains

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 manager and inspector completed a learning walk during the inspection.
- A joint observation was completed by the manager and inspector during a planned activity indoors.
- The inspector spoke to the children and staff throughout the inspection.
- The inspector held a meeting with the nursery manager. She looked at relevant documentation, including the nursery's specific risk assessments and evidence of the suitability of staff working in the nursery.
- Parents provided verbal feedback during the inspection. The inspector took account of their views.

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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