

# Inspection of Little Acorns Preschool

The Cabin, Barnard Road, LEIGH-ON-SEA, Essex SS9 3PH

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Inspection date: 10 March 2020

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<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
The quality of education	<b>Outstanding</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Outstanding</b>
Personal development	<b>Outstanding</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Outstanding</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

## **What is it like to attend this early years setting?**

### **The provision is outstanding**

Children make outstanding progress in their learning and development. Some children exceed staff's intended targets and expectations. Children are extremely engaged in their learning. Their concentration and attention skills are superb. Older children are very precise in their building techniques as they make intricate constructions from a variety of different bricks and malleable materials.

Children make exceedingly strong and close attachments to their key persons and feel safe and nurtured. They learn rapidly and respond exceptionally well to highly individualised attention from staff. Children carry out their own research on the internet and learn exciting facts about the topics that interest them most. They discover new ideas and learn new words to extend their vocabulary.

Children have an excellent understanding of the rules and routines of the pre-school. Staff teach them to have 'kind hearts', think 'kind thoughts' and use 'kind words'. Every child has the opportunity to become a 'helping hand' for staff and other children. This gives them a sense of responsibility and they take a pride in their role. Children's behaviour demonstrates their happiness and contentment. They display high levels of self-esteem and confidence, and benefit hugely from the frequent praise and affirmation from staff. Children are enthusiastic and excited as they receive 'gems' for their excellent behaviour and helpfulness.

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

- Staff challenge children to think critically and creatively. Children extend their own play ideas and build on the ideas of their peers. They work exceptionally well together as a team. For example, children make a watch tower for their play figures. Staff encourage children to think and solve problems, such as how their figures could reach a top platform. Children decide together how to build a stairway and lift, and whether the construction will be strong enough to support them.
- Children have exceptional opportunities to discover the wonders of the natural world. They have daily access to a nature area in the garden where they can examine small creatures, balance on logs and make 'cupcakes' with mud. Older children enjoy weekly excursions to nearby woodlands. They learn to manage risks as they climb trees and explore the contents of muddy puddles. Children build their confidence as they experience outdoor challenges that stimulate all their senses and provide them with skills for life.
- Staff build extremely effective partnerships with parents. They visit families in their homes where they gain a clear understanding of children's experiences. This helps staff to build on children's interests and develop activities that motivate them to learn more. Staff ensure that all parents are fully involved in

their children's activities. They provide resources and ideas to enable them to continue the learning at home.

- Children are extremely independent. They develop small-muscle skills as they zip up their coats. Children help staff to prepare their excellent healthy snacks. They learn responsibility for their belongings as they unpack their lunches and tidy them away. Staff offer children choices of interesting activities inside and outdoors. Children are fascinated by experiments that support their understanding of science. For example, they watch intently as dye drips through foam into water to simulate the way rain falls from clouds.
- Children experience magnificent creative activities as they learn about different religions and festivals that are celebrated around the world. They experiment with various textures and colours as they make pictures to mark the Indian festival of Holi. Children discuss their artistic creations together and demonstrate their excellent communication skills.
- Children use a wide range of materials, such as light boards and sand, to practise making marks in readiness for early writing. They excel in their understanding of literacy and numeracy. Children recite letter sounds and spell the letters in their name. Staff skilfully introduce mathematical concepts into every activity to reinforce their understanding.
- The manager, committee and staff have a deep understanding of the curriculum. They have extremely high expectations of children's achievements and the quality of their teaching. Staff observe each other's practice and continually reflect on the effectiveness of the activities they provide. The manager seeks innovative training for staff on an extremely wide range of topics to develop their already exceptional skills even further.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are extremely confident in their knowledge of safeguarding and child protection. They undertake training in all areas of safeguarding annually to keep their knowledge up to date. Staff are fully aware of their responsibilities to protect the children in their care. They know the signs and symptoms of abuse and how to record any concerns. Staff have an excellent understanding of the reporting procedures of their local authority and know who to contact if they feel that a child is at risk of harm. Recruitment procedures are robust and the manager checks the suitability of all staff regularly.

## Setting details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	EY294250
<b>Local authority</b>	Southend-on-Sea
<b>Inspection number</b>	10137553
<b>Type of provision</b>	Childcare on non-domestic premises
<b>Registers</b>	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
<b>Day care type</b>	Sessional day care
<b>Age range of children at time of inspection</b>	2 to 4
<b>Total number of places</b>	26
<b>Number of children on roll</b>	50
<b>Name of registered person</b>	Little Acorns Pre -School (Leigh-on-Sea) Committee
<b>Registered person unique reference number</b>	RP904047
<b>Telephone number</b>	01702470310
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	29 April 2016

## Information about this early years setting

Little Acorns Preschool registered in 2004. The pre-school operates from Monday to Thursday, 9.15am until 3.45pm, and on Friday from 9.15am until 12.15pm, during school term times. There are nine members of childcare staff, six of whom hold relevant early years qualifications at level 3, two are qualified at level 6 and the manager holds qualified teacher status. The pre-school provides funded early education for three- and four-year-old children.

## Information about this inspection

### Inspector

Jenny Forbes

## 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 carried out a joint observation with the manager.
- The inspector held discussions with the manager and spoke to staff, the committee chair and children.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents by speaking with some of them during the inspection and looked at relevant documentation.

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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