

# Inspection of Little Acorns

Main Street, West Hagbourne, Didcot, Oxfordshire OX11 0NA

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Inspection date: 20 April 2022

## **Overall effectiveness**

## **Requires improvement**

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The quality of education

**Requires improvement**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Requires improvement**

Personal development

**Requires improvement**

Leadership and management

**Requires improvement**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Good

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

### **The provision requires improvement**

The quality of teaching is variable. Staff plan a range of experiences that children enjoy. For example, children explore creative activities. Babies make patterns in flour and water using their hands and feet. Toddlers mix colours and make marks with items such as sponges. Older children learn about the similarities and differences of each other and the wider community. For instance, they partake in the village's St George's Day celebrations. However, staff are less confident about how to build on these interests to enhance children's understanding and knowledge. The curriculum is not sufficiently ambitious or planned to ensure that children engage consistently in high-quality learning.

Overall, children are independent and happy to come into the friendly nursery. They are welcomed by staff into a safe and secure environment. For example, children generally separate from their parents well and confidently approach staff for cuddles. However, staff do not deploy themselves well enough to provide the youngest children, especially those new to the nursery, with even greater levels of support and rich interaction.

Children learn to manage their behaviour, and staff sensitively encourage and support incidents that arise. Older children understand and can talk about the impact that unwanted behaviour can have on their peers. For instance, children understand that they need to share resources and take turns with their friends.

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

- Staff do not plan a curriculum that focuses precisely enough on helping children to work towards their next stages in learning. Additionally, staff do not always present information clearly in a sequence that helps children to make links with what they already know so that they can build on their prior learning. Although staff use children's interests as a basis for the activities they provide, activities sometimes lack a clear intention. For example, staff capture children's love for a popular story character. However, despite staff's good intentions, the aim of the activity is not well thought out or resourced by staff.
- Although staff supervise children well, they do not always deploy themselves effectively to support children's learning. Consequently, some staff have no option but to supervise children to ensure their safety. They do not have time to interact meaningfully to help children benefit from the planned activities. As a result, some children do not spend long enough engaged in valuable and stimulating experiences.
- The nursery has been through a period of change. The management team has worked to identify and make improvements to the quality of the provision. Staff have completed some training to help update their knowledge and skills.

However, the management team has not clearly identified the weaknesses in the quality of the curriculum and teaching. The team recognises that it would be beneficial to observe staff practice more closely. However, this is still in its infancy. Although staff have regular opportunities to discuss their performance, they do not receive enough clear guidance to help them to develop their teaching skills further. However, staff enjoy working at the nursery. They find the provider approachable and supportive.

- Staff check that the nursery is hygienic and safe, and, overall, succeed in doing this. However, at times, they do not ensure that all children consistently understand and follow hygiene rules, such as wiping their nose.
- Children are developing some awareness of healthy lifestyles. They wash their hands before eating and after playing in the garden. They are served freshly cooked, nutritious food. Staff understand children's individual dietary requirements and they ensure that these are maintained by sitting with the children.
- Parents comment that they feel well informed. They appreciate the support they have received from the nursery staff during the COVID-19 pandemic. Staff provide daily feedback and encourage parents to view and make comments about their children's learning through online records.
- Children's physical development is promoted well. Staff provide children with plenty of opportunities for outdoor play and exercise and make good use of the large outdoor area. For example, children play games, such as hopscotch, and navigate obstacle courses in the outdoor play area. This supports children's self-esteem and confidence.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff have a suitable understanding of their roles and responsibilities for child protection, including wider safeguarding issues. They understand the signs and indicators that may mean a child is at risk of harm. Staff are aware of the procedures to follow if they have concerns about a child or a colleague. Staff are provided with regular safeguarding training by the management team. This includes training on wider safeguarding issues, such as the risk of children being exposed to extremist views. This helps staff to keep their knowledge current. Robust recruitment and vetting arrangements are in place to ensure that those working with children are suitable.

## What does the setting need to do to improve?

**To meet the requirements of the early years foundation stage, the provider must:**

	Due date

improve the planning and implementation of the curriculum to ensure that it is ambitious, sequenced and builds on what children know and can do in order to maximise their learning	22/06/2022
ensure that staff are consistently deployed effectively to support and enhance children's experiences and learning, both indoors and outdoors	22/06/2022
ensure that staff receive support to implement the curriculum effectively and provide children with appropriate challenges in order to promote their learning and development.	22/06/2022

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

- support staff to fully understand the importance of ensuring that all children consistently follow good hygiene routines.

## Setting details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	EY462210
<b>Local authority</b>	Oxfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10233285
<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>	Full day care
<b>Age range of children at time of inspection</b>	0 to 4
<b>Total number of places</b>	78
<b>Number of children on roll</b>	109
<b>Name of registered person</b>	Little Acorns (West Hagbourne) Ltd
<b>Registered person unique reference number</b>	RP532569
<b>Telephone number</b>	01235 851423
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	29 August 2018

## Information about this early years setting

Little Acorns registered in 2013 and is located in the village of West Hagbourne, near Didcot, Oxfordshire. There are currently 19 members of staff who work directly with the children. Of these, nine hold recognised childcare qualifications from level 2 to level 6. The nursery opens from Monday to Friday all year round, except for bank holidays. In addition, the nursery offers holiday care. Sessions run from 7.30am to 6pm. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

## Information about this inspection

### Inspector

Amanda Perkin

## Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the nursery received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the provider and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the nursery.
- The manager, who is also the provider, and the inspector had a learning walk across all areas of the nursery to understand how the early years curriculum is organised.
- The inspector observed staff's interactions with the children during activities, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact on the children's progress and achievements.
- The provider, assistant manager, staff and children engaged in discussions with the inspector at appropriate times during the inspection.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation with the assistant manager and discussed the children's progress and achievements.
- A sample of documents was reviewed by the inspector. This included evidence of staff's suitability and training.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents by speaking to them.

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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