

Inspection of Little Acorns

Village Hall, Holcot Road, Brixworth, NORTHAMPTON NN6 9BS

Inspection date: 30 June 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding
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What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children arrive at this welcoming pre-school ready to learn. They quickly settle and enjoy the stimulating activities available to them. Children develop their physical skills on an indoor climbing frame. They carefully climb and show delight as they travel down the slide. Supportive staff encourage children to take measured risks as they climb. Children snuggle into staff as they read a story and join in with the familiar text, pointing to the words and repeating the phrases in the book. Children use their small-muscle skills to manipulate play dough. They squeeze the dough and cut out shapes. Children further practise their small-muscle skills as they handle brushes and glue sticks. They create pictures and write 'letters' on an easel as supportive staff gently encourage them to name the letters.

Children benefit from outdoor play in a secure, engaging space. They investigate bugs they have found with great interest and identify them using a reference guide. Children use their mathematical skills as they pour flour into containers. They learn about the world as they tip water through funnels and watch with curiosity as a solar fountain spouts water. Children develop coordination using bicycles and scooters. They use their large muscles to propel them along a road the staff have created for them. As they travel along, they use their imagination to stop and pretend to buy ice creams. Staff encourage the children talk about their favourite flavours. Children use descriptive words to talk about their ice creams and relate this to what they like to eat at home.

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

- The pre-school has a dedicated manager. She places emphasis on the importance of building the children in her care into resilient learners. The manager has a committed staff team, who know the children very well. Staff ensure swift action is taken to ensure children get the support they need, including funded children and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. As a result of this, these children progress very well in their learning.
- Parents speak highly of the care and education their children receive at pre-school. They mention the good level of support the staff give their children and the close relationships they form. Parents receive daily feedback and benefit from regular updates on their child's progress.
- Children benefit from the learning opportunities they are given at pre-school. However, at times the staff team is unsure about how to deliver some aspects of the curriculum. Furthermore, staff occasionally do not give children enough time to respond to questions.
- Managers use additional funding to enhance children's learning opportunities. The pre-school staff have adapted a recently acquired piece of land into a forest school. Staff are benefiting from additional forest school training. This has

helped staff to support children to connect with the natural world and extend learning opportunities outdoors further.

- The staff teach children the importance of leading healthy lifestyles. The children enjoy a selection of healthy snacks at pre-school. They select their snack and independently butter bread and cut fruit. They use jugs to pour water and milk skilfully. Oral health is promoted well. Children recently enjoyed a visit from a local dentist.
- Staff prepare older children for school. They provide a selection of uniforms in the role-play area for children to practise dressing themselves. The pre-school staff have good links with the local school and host regular meetings. Teachers visit the pre-school to meet the children and talk to the staff about children's development and learning. This ensures that children are prepared for the transition to Reception class.
- Children benefit from embedded routines at pre-school. They understand that when a staff member shakes a tambourine they go and sit down on the carpet. They are familiar with what happens next and recognise when it is time for snack or time to go home. Children's behaviour is very good. They are inquisitive and approach visitors confidently. They talk about their favourite activities at pre-school and tell visitors their name.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The manager has a secure understanding of her role and responsibility in keeping children safe at pre-school. The manager understands how to manage allegations against staff. She ensures that staff are suitable to work with children through robust recruitment and selection procedures. Staff understand how to keep children safe. Effective arrangements are in place for staff to undergo further training. As a result of this, staff are able to confidently talk about signs and symptoms of abuse, including reporting procedures. The pre-school is a secure and safe place for children. Staff ensure that ratios are maintained throughout the day. They are aware of how to manage risks in the environment.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- enhance staff's knowledge about how to confidently deliver the curriculum designed for the children
- strengthen staff understanding of how to use questions to find out what children need to learn.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY389345
Local authority	West Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10138518
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	2 to 4
Total number of places	44
Number of children on roll	44
Name of registered person	Little Acorns Partnership
Registered person unique reference number	RP528777
Telephone number	01604 880 654
Date of previous inspection	28 November 2012

Information about this early years setting

Little Acorns registered in 2009. It is located in the Northamptonshire village of Brixworth. The pre-school provides funded early education for three- and four-year-old children. Little Acorns is open during school term times between 8.15am and 3.15pm. The pre-school is privately owned and employs nine qualified members of childcare staff. These include a member of staff with early years professional status and one staff member with a qualification at level 5.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Stephanie North

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the provider 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 provider.
- The inspector viewed the provision and discussed the safety and suitability of the premises.
- The manager joined the inspector on a learning walk and talked to the inspector about their curriculum and what they want their children to learn.
- The inspector spoke to children, to find out about their time at the setting.
- The inspector talked to staff at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The inspector spoke with the nominated individual about the leadership and management of the setting.
- The special educational needs coordinator spoke to the inspector about how they support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The inspector observed the quality of education being provided, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact that this was having on children's learning.
- The inspector carried out joint observations of group activities with the manager.
- The inspector looked at relevant documentation and reviewed evidence of the suitability of staff working in the pre-school.
- The inspector spoke to several parents during the inspection and 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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