

Inspection of Little Acorns Nursery

Vernon Road, Worsbrough, Barnsley, South Yorkshire S70 5HJ

Inspection date: 19 March 2024

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	Good
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What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children excitedly bound into the nursery, where staff welcome them with a warm and friendly greeting. Children have secure emotional attachments with staff. This helps them to feel safe and secure, settle quickly and play happily. Children benefit from a broad range of learning opportunities. These, overall, take good account of children's stage of learning and their interests. This helps all children to progress well and develop fundamental skills for moving on to school.

Children make choices about their play. They independently access resources that support many aspects of their learning. Staff recognise that many children love being outside. They enable children to freely access the well-resourced garden, which helps children to thrive and develop great confidence in their physical skills. For example, children use tools to dig for worms and balance on planks, which they strategically place on tyres, large industrial cotton reels and crates. Children explore, investigate and have immense fun. For example, they splash in muddy puddles, negotiate and slide down the muddy banking, make a 'mud' pie and roll balls down plastic tubes.

Staff model and encourage important social skills. This is reflected in how well children behave and interact, for example, as they build a train track together. Staff use visual aids, such as a large sand timer, to support turn-taking with more popular equipment, such as the tyre swing.

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

- Staff encourage parents to share a wide range of important information about their children. This helps staff to get to know children and tailor settling-in visits according to each child's individual needs.
- Staff constantly monitor children's progress and swiftly identify and support children who have gaps in their development. They make timely referrals and work in close partnership with other professionals. Staff support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities exceptionally well to ensure that they are fully included into nursery life.
- Overall, staff plan the nursery day well to engage and support children. However, younger children become fidgety as the group story is more suited to the older children. In addition, staff give them cutlery that is not matched to their stage of small-muscle control.
- Staff establish strong links with parents, to support children's learning together. For example, staff plan regular progress meetings, share photos and information via social media and plan stay-and-play activity sessions. Parents receive regular newsletters highlighting their children's future learning and how they can support this at home. Parents share highly complimentary feedback.

- Children learn to manage their feelings and behaviour, such as through stories that encourage them to think about what might make them happy, sad, worried or angry. Older children delight in sharing such favourite stories with the inspector.
- Children are engrossed during activities that develop their hand-eye coordination in readiness for future writing. For example, staff show younger children how to stretch and roll the dough and older children competently use tools with dough. Children scoop coloured rice and use a ladle to add more muddy water while making pretend food in the exploratory kitchen. They place circular cereal onto lengths of uncooked spaghetti, which staff place vertically in dough.
- Staff encourage children to do many things for themselves, which helps them to develop independence. For example, children excitedly help to put on their waterproof suits and wellies. They use cereal dispensers at breakfast time and pour their own drinks at mealtimes. Children wash their hands before tucking into the healthy, freshly prepared lunch.
- Staff's qualifications have an overall positive impact on their practice. Staff expand on children's learning and support their early language skills while positively interacting with them. For example, while searching for worms, staff spontaneously sing songs, encourage children to count the worms and exclaim how 'big' one particular worm is when it is stretched out.
- Staff have close links with nursery and reception staff within the host school. They regularly share information to support certain aspects of children's transitions. However, this is not always precisely focused on how they can complement nursery-aged children's learning to the highest level.
- The passionate manager and nursery owner monitor and improve many aspects of practice, such as the outdoor curriculum. They spend time working directly in the nursery offering staff support, feedback and guidance. However, the training and coaching for staff are not always precisely focused on that which will strengthen every aspect of their teaching and the curriculum.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts children's interests first.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- take greater account of, and support, two-year-old children's individual learning needs more precisely during care routines and activities
- share more information with the host school, to complement children's learning and help them to make the best possible progress through a shared and

consistent approach

- strengthen the arrangements for monitoring, coaching and training, to help staff to raise the quality of education to the highest level.

Setting details

Unique reference number	302875
Local authority	Barnsley
Inspection number	10311835
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 at time of inspection	1 to 10
Total number of places	28
Number of children on roll	92
Name of registered person	Ward Green Pre School Limited
Registered person unique reference number	RP904201
Telephone number	01226 248123
Date of previous inspection	12 April 2018

Information about this early years setting

Little Acorns Nursery registered in 1993. It is independently run and is located in the grounds of Ward Green Primary School in Worsbrough. The nursery employs eight members of childcare staff. Of these, seven staff hold appropriate early years qualifications: five are at level 3 and two are at level 4. The nursery opens from Monday to Friday, all year round. This excludes two weeks during the Christmas period and holiday care is dependent on the demand for this. Sessions are from 7.30am until 6pm. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. It provides wrap-around care for children who attend the host school.

Information about this inspection

Inspector
Rachel Ayo

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 the manager and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the nursery.
- The inspector held discussions with the manager and provider. She carried out a learning walk with the manager. This helped the inspector to understand how staff organise the early years provision and the curriculum.
- The inspector observed the quality of education, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact of this on children's learning.
- The manager and the inspector carried out a joint observation of an activity taking place.
- The inspector spoke with children, parents and staff during the inspection. The manager also shared written feedback from parents.
- The manager shared various policies and documents with the inspector, including those related to self-improvement and the suitability of staff.

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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