

Inspection of Little Acorns

Church House, High Street, Halesowen, West Midlands B63 3BB

Inspection date: 19 September 2025

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Good

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Staff provide a warm, friendly welcome for children and families as they arrive. Children have their own pegs for their personal belongings, helping them feel a sense of belonging. To start the day, staff lead a cheerful hello song, greeting each child by name. They offer plenty of cuddles and reassurance to children who become upset. For example, staff remind new starters that their parents will return. This comforts and reassures children. As a result, children feel safe and valued. They settle quickly and are ready to engage in play and learning.

The learning environment promotes children's choice, with activities planned from recent assessments and staff's observations of play interests. For example, at the funky fingers table, children sort images by size, supporting fine motor development and early mathematical understanding. At the building station, they use magnetic shapes and bricks to design and construct, which encourages creativity and problem-solving skills. Consequently, children grow in confidence and make steady progress in all areas of their learning.

Staff consistently model clear expectations for behaviour. They regularly praise children's excellent behaviour. When necessary, staff gently remind children to share, take turns and use words to express themselves. As a result, children understand what is expected, develop an awareness of others and learn to manage their own behaviour effectively.

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

- Staff provide an inviting environment that encourages children to lead their play and make independent choices. Children demonstrate high levels of engagement and independence when leading their own learning. For example, in the role-play area, they act out familiar experiences such as cooking, while others enjoy mark making with paint and chalk. Staff plan meaningful and engaging focus activities that build on what children already know, but they do not always share these with the children. This means that children do not always know what is expected of them.
- Staff provide a nurturing, inclusive and child-centred environment where all identities, cultures and interests are valued. They promote awareness of different cultures and communities. For instance, they learn about festivals such as Halloween and Eid, linking activities to these events. Children enjoy trips to the farm and zoo, sometimes joining other settings. These experiences further enhance children's learning and broaden their understanding of the world.
- Support for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is robust. Staff understand children's individual needs, liaise with parents and external professionals and review plans termly. Additional funding is used

purposefully to provide resources that enhance children's development. Consequently, children with SEND make progress alongside their peers.

- Staff use daily routines such as snack time to promote children's independence, self-care and social skills. They support children to wash their hands and use the toilet independently. Staff encourage children to pour drinks and serve themselves from a range of healthy food options. As a result, children develop confidence, independence and social skills.
- Staff support children to recognise and manage their emotions. They use expression cards to name feelings, such as relaxed and shy. Staff explain how actions can affect others. They use strategies, such as blowing bubbles, to distract and help children remain calm. As a result, children develop an awareness of their own feelings, and staff support children to manage them effectively.
- Parents are positive about the setting and their children's progress. Staff maintain good partnerships with parents. They share information through newsletters and regular updates about children's activities and development. However, they do not yet provide sufficient guidance or ideas for parents to support children's learning at home. As a result, parents have limited support to extend children's learning at home.
- Leaders are responsive and adaptable. They regularly review the provision and create purposeful action plans to improve their offer to local families. Staff are knowledgeable and motivated. They benefit from regular supervision and targeted training to help them carry out their roles effectively, supporting positive outcomes for all children.

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:

- ensure staff explain planned activities clearly, enabling children to understand what is expected and achieve the best possible learning outcomes
- provide parents with guidance and practical ideas to help them support and extend children's learning at home.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY551390
Local authority	Dudley
Inspection number	10408081
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Day care type	Sessional day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	2 to 4
Total number of places	27
Number of children on roll	28
Name of registered person	Melanie Gooch & Samantha Riley Partnership
Registered person unique reference number	RP908401
Telephone number	07866264499
Date of previous inspection	24 January 2020

Information about this early years setting

Little Acorns registered in 2017. The setting employs five members of childcare staff. Of these, two hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 5 and three hold qualifications at level 3. The setting opens from Monday to Friday during term-time. The setting provides government funded early years education for all eligible children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Sarah Dukes

Inspection activities

- The manager and inspector completed a learning walk together of all areas of the setting and discussed the early years curriculum.
- The inspector talked to staff at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The inspector observed the quality of education being provided and assessed the impact that this was having on children's learning.
- The manager and the inspector carried out a joint observation.
- Parents shared their views of the setting with the inspector.
- The manager showed the inspector documentation to demonstrate 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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