



Little Acorns Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	143076
Inspection date	08 January 2007
Inspector	Jennifer Barton
Setting Address	The Playing Fields Pavilion, Greenway, North Curry, Somerset, TA3 6NQ
Telephone number	01823 491615 or 07812 818874
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Registered person	Little Acorns Pre School
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day care

ABOUT THIS INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality of childcare and, if applicable, of nursery education. The inspection was carried out under Part XA Children Act 1989 as introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000 and, where nursery education is provided, under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004; the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding; and, where nursery education is provided, the *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration or 1 April 2004 whichever is the later.

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

For more information about early years inspections, please see the booklet *Are you ready for your inspection?* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Little Acorns Pre-school has been operating for approximately 28 years. It is a committee run group and is situated in the pavilion on the village playing field in North Curry, Somerset. The premises consist of one main play room with kitchen and toilet facilities. Children have access to a small fully enclosed hard surface play area and the playing field. They also use the adjoining park for its apparatus.

The pre-school is open five days a week during term time. It offers sessions on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday from 09:00 until 15:00 and on Wednesday and Friday from 09:00 until 13:00.

There are currently 33 children on roll and of these 25 are in receipt of funding.

Seven part time members of staff work with the children. One member of staff has the appropriate early years qualification and three members of staff are undertaking training in early years National Vocational Qualification Level 3 in childcare and education.

The group are supported by the Local Authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children enjoy a healthy environment, each session there are indoor and outdoor activities to help children develop control of their bodies. Children are able to access a wide range of resources, such as construction, wheeled toys and balancing equipment which promotes their physical development. Children have free access to the adjoining outdoor area during sessions and therefore benefit from regular fresh air which contributes to their good health. Children are protected against the harmful rays of the sun when playing outdoors as staff provide a gazebo.

Children enjoy healthy and nutritious snacks and drinks. They learn about healthy foods in discussions and planned activities, such as cooking and making fresh fruit salad. Children understand the reasons for eating healthy foods, such as building strong bones and teeth. Children are able to access drinking water throughout the session and staff are aware of children's dietary requirements which effectively meets their individual needs.

Children are well cared for in a clean environment where they learn the importance of good hygiene and personal care. Children understand why they wash their hands before handling food, after messy and outdoor play, and visits to the toilet. Children are able to access antibacterial soap and disposable towels to prevent the spread of infection. Accurate records are maintained of all accidents and medication administered, thereby ensuring children are well cared for. Staff have parental consent to seek emergency medical advice or treatment, which is in the best interest of the child.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children enjoy a safe, bright and cheerful setting. Children's safety is promoted through good risk assessments which minimise accidents, such as completing daily checks on the environment due to sharing premises with other users. The premises provide adequate space and equipment and furniture is well maintained and suitable for the ages of the children cared for. Children are able to move safely and freely indoors and outdoors to participate in activities to support their development. There is a good range of toys, resources and equipment and they are organised effectively so children can easily access them and make their own choices.

Children are learning to keep themselves safe as staff remind them to pick up resources from the floor and to carry scissors correctly when moving around the room. Children benefit from

good levels of supervision both indoors and outdoors. There are good procedures for outings to keep children safe. Good door security and registration systems support children's safety.

Children's safety against the risk of fire is promoted by staff's clear understanding of evacuation and the participation in regular fire drills, which are appropriately logged. Fire appliances, such as fire blankets, smoke detectors and fire extinguishers are appropriately located and well maintained. Staff have a good understanding of child protection procedures and have information for advice which helps to protect children from harm.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enjoy their time in the pre-school, they arrive happy and eager to participate. Children are achieving well because staff are committed and interested in what children do and say and respond well to their needs. Staff have a good knowledge of the curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage and are becoming aware of the framework for Birth to three matters. Staff are enthusiastic and give children lots of choices which motivates children to participate and be involved. Staff have good interaction skills to extend children's learning. There is good questioning and a good balance of child initiation and staff direction which supports children's learning well. Children benefit from using a wide range of resources and materials, such as pasta, bubble wrap and polystyrene during their 'junk modelling' activities. They are able to use their imagination and creativity well as they design and make models of rockets, kites and castles. Children show good levels of confidence and independence as they make choices not only with indoor activities but outdoor activities continually throughout the session.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning for funded children is good. Children are making good progress across the six areas of learning. Plans identify aims and objectives and together with children's progress records relate to most of the stepping stones. However, plans do not show how children's next steps and individual learning needs are carried through to future planning to ensure a consistency in their progress and development, especially for the more able children to reach their full potential. Good systems are in place to ensure children have regular observations. Children's learning is extended effectively through staff's good interaction skills as they play, talk and question without stifling children's own development. Staff have a good understanding of how children learn and provide a wide range of interesting activities.

Children are growing in confidence and independence and are motivated to learn and choose their own activities both indoors and outdoors. Children's listening and speaking skills are developing well and they are excited as they join in with words and actions in the 'Bear Hunt' story. Children have a wide variety of mark making activities, such as using chalk and sand to encourage their writing skills, and some children are able to write their own name on their work.

Daily routines and activities, such as registration time and singing number songs allow children to become confident with counting. Activities, such as construction, encourage children to solve simple mathematical problems as they find the correct number of wheels for their vehicles. Children participate in numerous activities to develop their creative and imaginary skills. They

enjoy their art and craft activities to make models of vehicles and kites and are competent using a wide range of equipment and resources. Children have opportunities to explore as they make 'gloop' and observe changes from first hand experiences. Children take apart torches to explore how they work. Children enjoy familiar and new experiences in varied role play, such as home corner, café and post office, where they use good imaginary skills. Children are being introduced to information technology with telephones and programmable toys to support their learning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are valued and respected as individuals. All children are welcome into the setting and receive good support and care from staff who liaise closely with parents and carers to ensure children's progress is suitably enhanced. Children are able to access resources and participate in planned activities to reflect positive images of diversity. Staff have good systems in place, such as individual learning plans to support the welfare and development of children with special needs. Children's spiritual, moral social and cultural development is fostered.

Children are learning to share and take turns as they use toys and play games. Children behave well, they are able to show kindness and consideration to others. Children's good behaviour is promoted by staff's praise and encouragement and an effective sticker system supports children's behaviour. Children benefit from good behaviour management and staff's consistency in dealing with behavioural issues.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Good written information, such as a prospectus, policies and procedures keep parents informed about the setting. However, not all policies and procedures and the system for recording complaints are up to date. A notice board and daily verbal communication keeps parents up to date on forthcoming events. A list of activities that children have participated in is daily displayed to keep parents informed. Staff provide written reports to parents showing children's progress and development.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are happy and settled in the well organised setting. Children's work and posters are displayed to provide a warm, cheerful and welcoming environment. Staff ensure furniture, equipment and toys are arranged to cater for the needs of all children and offer easy accessibility and a wide choice of resources. Rooms and space including outdoor space are used effectively to meet the needs of children. Staff are well deployed and children are supported by regular positive interaction and some individual attention.

The leadership and management of the setting is good. There is a strong relationship between staff and committee and they work well together as a team although they have separate roles and responsibilities. There are effective systems in place to monitor the provision, such as staff appraisals and regular meetings. Any areas identified for improvement are addressed, such as employing an administrator to support both the committee and staff. Also developing the

operational plan has been identified as an area for improvement and this will be implemented to support the needs of children and staff. Staff are very committed and the management is supportive of staff's training needs.

Children's welfare, care and learning is well supported through mostly good policies and procedures and good partnership with parents. The good quality of care and nursery education supports the requirements to meet children's individual needs. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

The previous care inspection recommended that the provision update their child protection and special need policies. The provision have revised these policies to ensure children are protected and cared for appropriately. The provision was also recommended to improve resources to promote equal opportunities. The provision have obtained resources, such as posters, dolls, books and puzzles to reflect diversity and plan activities, such as Diwali, which promote positive images of culture and disability.

The previous nursery education inspection recommended that activity evaluations are meaningful and are used to inform future planning; that mathematics is introduced into everyday activities and children's access to sufficient challenge in physical development, information technology and role play is increased. Staff have obtained more challenging wheeled toys, an outdoor sandpit and mini garden planting box to further challenge children's physical development. Staff have also introduced regular music and dancing activities. Staff regularly change role play resources and include information technology equipment to provide further interest and challenge to support children's learning. Staff have introduced mathematics into everyday situations, such as registration and snack time, as well as planned activities to promote children's number recognition, counting and problem solving skills.

Staff evaluations on activities are relating to children's achievement and enjoyment. They are continuing to develop their plans so activity evaluations are recorded to inform future planning and promote children's progress.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

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WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- improve the system for recording of complaints and ensure the contact details for Ofsted are included in the complaints procedure for parents
- develop the operational plan and ensure policies and procedures are regularly updated, signed and adopted to promote the welfare, care and development of children.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- further develop planning and assessments to ensure they identify the next steps in children's learning and that children are able to reach their full potential across all the stepping stones

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education (HMI ref no 2599)* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk