

Little Acorns Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	143076
Inspection date	18/03/2010
Inspector	Rachael Williams
Setting address	The Playing Fields Pavilion, Greenway, North Curry, Somerset, TA3 6NQ
Telephone number	01823 491615 or 07812 818874
Email	
Type of setting	Childcare on non-domestic premises

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

The provider must provide a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must provide a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Childcare (Inspection) Regulations 2008 regulations 9 and 10).

The setting also makes provision for children older than the early years age group which is registered on the voluntary and/or compulsory part(s) of the Childcare Register. This report does not include an evaluation of that provision, but a comment about compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Register is included in Annex B.

Please see our website for more information about each childcare provider. We publish inspection reports, conditions of registration and details of complaints we receive where we or the provider take action to meet the requirements of registration.

Description of the setting

Little Acorns Pre-School has been operating since 1980. 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, changing rooms, 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 and have regular walks in the village.

The pre-school is open five days a week during term-time. The group is registered on the Early Years Register and both parts of the Childcare Register to care for a maximum of 24 children from two years to under eight years. It offers sessions each day from 9am until 3pm. At present, there are 23 children on roll; all of whom are in the early years age range. The group support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The committee employ five part-time members of staff. The manager and her deputy both hold level 3 or above early years qualifications. The remaining staff are all working towards recognised early years qualifications. Permanent staff are supported by qualified bank staff.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children are cared for in a small, rural group where they receive individual attention. Good relationships are established and they enjoy their time at the setting. On the whole, they make good progress in their learning and development through well-planned activities. Partnerships with parents, other agencies and early years providers are good and ensure continuity in children's care. Predominantly, rigorous systems ensure that children's welfare is promoted well. Self-evaluation is being developed to effectively monitor the provision. Staff work closely together and have a common sense of purpose to ensure outcomes for children are good.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To fully meet the specific requirements of the EYFS, the registered person must:

- ensure information is documented with regard to who the child normally lives with (Documentation) 01/04/2010

To further improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- develop further systems to assess children's progress to ensure learning priorities are clearly identified
- ensure the record of complaints is updated in line with outcomes for children

as identified in the Early Years Foundation Stage guidance.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children are cared for in a safe and secure environment which is appropriately risk assessed to ensure potential hazards are identified and positive action taken to minimise risk to the children. Appropriate recruitment procedures, including vetting arrangements, ensure children are cared for by suitable adults. There are robust systems in place to ensure that children are collected by nominated adults to further ensure their safety. Staff have good knowledge of child protection issues and are improving their understanding through attendance at relevant safeguarding training.

Engagement with parents is good. Parents feel fully involved in the setting, for instance, through questionnaires and feedback sheets, and receive a wealth of information regarding the service provided. Policies and procedures are readily available to parents, however, although there have been no complaints, the complaints record has not been updated in line with the outcomes for children as depicted in the Early Years Foundation Stage framework. Recent parent interviews have ensured that parents are well informed of their child's progress. There is a good ethos to promote communication either through daily discussions or through the home link book. One parent comments on how approachable and supportive the staff are with regards to her child's individual needs. Flexible settling in arrangements ensure that children are confident and settled within this small, rural group. The key person system works well to ensure that information regarding children's individual care is collected so that each child's individuality is acknowledged and respected. However, individual record forms do not include the information regarding which parent the child normally lives with. This is a breach of specific legal requirement. Partnerships with other agencies and early years providers are effective in ensuring continuity in children's care. For example, there is good liaison with key agencies to support children's attendance from the local traveller sites.

The small team of staff work closely together to improve outcomes for the children. They have a common sense of purpose and are proactive in continually evaluating their provision. For example, they listen to recommendations from early years advisers and adapt their provision. The group have recently experimented with snack-time and put in place a café-style system. With support from the children, the staff evaluated its impact on the children; children benefited from the opportunity to continue their play without disruption. However, staff felt it reduced learning opportunities because of space requirements. Therefore, snack-time evolved into a shorter time where children could access a healthy and nutritious snack independently but could also enjoy their continuous play. An 'ideas book' is used well to ensure that all staff contribute to making improvements within the setting. Staff are proactive in accessing relevant training to further support and embed their knowledge and understanding of the framework. For instance, one member of staff is currently attending Early Years Professional Status training.

The quality and standards of the early years provision and outcomes for children

Children are supported well by friendly and approachable staff. They benefit from a warm and welcoming environment which is well-organised to provide a broad and balanced range of experiences. Children select activities independently and the free-flow arrangements to the outside area ensure that children have numerous opportunities to be active and outside in the fresh air. Children show good spatial awareness as they negotiate space on the ride-on toys; one child explains that he has been driving carefully as he is giving his friend a lift. Staff are conscious of the need to encourage children's independence and are currently photographing all the toys and resources in storage to ensure that children are aware of what is available. Staff value children's contributions, for instance, when a child brings a paper aeroplane in that he has carefully made at home all children are thrilled to have a go at making them.

Children are actively involved hence, their behaviour is very good as there is little time for them to be disinterested or bored. Children are fully aware of routines, for instance, when the triangle sounds all children help to tidy away ready for lunchtime. Children make decisions about their learning. A child confidently requests the templates and proceeds to name all the dinosaurs. He shows good coordination as he holds the templates steadily and uses mark-making equipment to draw around it. The children enjoy exploring Easter activities, for instance, two children are engrossed in creating patterns and mixing colours as they decorate Easter eggs, showing sustained attention and interest. The children show excellent knowledge of the letters in their names as they correctly form shapes to label their creations. Children use construction materials well to create models, such as water pistols. They are able to explain what they have made and use them in their role play which is well supported by adults.

Assessment systems are being developed as new documentation does not give staff the flexibility to record their observations alongside the learning and development requirements. Staff make pertinent observations to evidence children's engagement in activities and record these under the six areas of learning to ensure a good coverage of experiences. These are linked to children's stage of development, however, learning priorities are not fully identified.

Children's safety is paramount. All areas used by the children are checked daily to ensure they are safe and secure. Effective procedures have been established to ensure that children cannot leave the setting unnoticed and that all adults visiting the setting are routinely recorded. An accurate record of children's attendance ensures that ratios are fully maintained. Children become aware of their own safety as they are involved in regular evacuation procedures. Appropriate consent is gained from parents for children to be involved in walks around the village and sound systems are in place to risk assess all types of outings. Staff ensure that children are aware of road safety and closely supervise the children. There are appropriate systems in place to ensure that medication, accidents and incidents are routinely recorded. Children become aware of healthy lifestyles. For example, they are aware of the need to wash their hands before eating and do so using

antibacterial soap and drying them on individual paper towels to ensure germs are not spread. Children wait patiently and recite 'Grace' before eating their lunch. Healthy eating is promoted and parents provide nutritious lunches for the children. Parents are reminded to include an ice block to maintain it at an appropriate temperature as lunchboxes are stored in the changing rooms. Individually named water bottles are readily available for the children to access independently when they are thirsty. Consequently, through effective teamwork, outcomes for children are good.

Annex A: record of inspection judgements

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	2

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	2
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding	2
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	2
The effectiveness of partnerships	2
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	2

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	2
The extent to which children feel safe	2
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	2
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	2

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Annex B: the Childcare Register

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are: Met

The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are: Met