

# Little Acorns Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Email</b>	
<b>Type of setting</b>	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.

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## Description of the setting

Little Acorns Pre-School opened in 1995. The group is a registered charity and is managed by a committee of parents. It operates from a room in a purpose-built modern community hall on the edge of the Park Farm estate in Ashford. It has its own cloakroom facilities, access to a kitchen and an enclosed outside play-space.

The pre-school is registered on the Early Years Register and both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register to care for a maximum of 30 children under eight years at any one time. There are currently 79 children on roll, all of whom are in the early years age group, attending a mix of full and part time hours.

The pre-school opens five days a week during school term-times. Sessions are from 9:15am-11:45am and afternoon sessions (Monday-Friday) from 12:30pm-3:00pm with an optional lunch-time session from 11:45-12:30. The pre-school is able to accept children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities as well as those who speak English as an additional language.

There are 11 staff employed to work with the children and a minimum of seven are present each session. Of these, six hold recognised childcare qualifications and four are working towards qualifications. They are supported by an administrator. The setting receives support from the local authority advisory team.

## The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children have great fun and are making good progress in all areas of their development as they play and learn with their friends. Regular self-evaluation supports staff to organise the pre-school to provide a safe, inclusive and child-centred environment in which children are settled and happy. Children's individual personalities and needs are clearly identified as a result of competent systems for assessment, monitoring and planning. The high level of focus placed on working in partnerships with their parents and carers results in children receiving care which is consistent and co-ordinated.

## What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- use the sensitive observations undertaken on each child to clearly identify their next steps
- review the planning of some adult lead activities to ensure that children's creativity is not restricted by too much adult direction
- take steps to form relationships with other professionals involved in delivering the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) to the children to share observations and to ensure that care is co-ordinated and complimentary.

## **The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision**

Children are protected by clear and appropriate safety procedures. These include daily health and safety checks of the premises and stringent security at the entrance to the pre-school room. Written records are maintained of risk assessments undertaken on the play environment, including the fixed equipment in the garden and staff also carry out risk assessments on activities set out on a daily basis. The manager takes lead responsibility for co-ordinating the investigation of child protection concerns. She has attended training to support her to recognise the potential signs and symptoms of abuse as the process to be followed should it be necessary to make a referral. Robust recruitment procedures are followed ensuring that all staff are suitably qualified and fully checked.

The manager and staff team fully recognise the importance of working in partnership with parents and carers and give them a very friendly welcome as they enter the pre-school. Parents and carers are provided with a good range of written information, including notices, news letters, policies and procedures. These include the process to be followed should they wish to make a complaint. They also receive a good deal of information specifically relating to their child and the progress that they are making. They are invited to contribute observations from home which supports the staff to ensure that care is consistent and co-ordinated.

The manager has a very positive attitude towards working with other childcare settings involved in delivering the EYFS to the children. She had yet to implement an effective procedure for sharing information in order to assist all parties to plan complimentary care and activities. However, extremely good arrangements are in place to work with the local authority advisory team and other professionals, such as speech therapists. As a result, staff are very effectively identifying and meeting children's individual care and learning needs. The deputy manager very competently takes lead responsibility for planning and overseeing the care of children with disabilities and/or learning difficulties. Similar care and attention is given to supporting children and families for whom English is an additional language.

A strong commitment to ongoing self-evaluation enables the manager and staff team to identify and address areas for improvement. This ensures that routines and working practices are tailored to meet the changing needs of the children and their families. Staff produce termly reports indicating the progress that each child has made and identifying their future goals. However, they do not routinely identify specific next steps as a result of the sensitive observations undertaken on each child. This does not provide staff with a useful tool for ongoing reflection. However, all staff are highly motivated and have a thorough understanding of the EYFS. This enables them to provide experiences and opportunities which the children thoroughly enjoy and which offer a good level of challenge. As a result, children are making good progress in all areas of their development.

Children play and learn in a bright, child-centred environment. Space is well used

and children enjoy being able to flow freely between the indoor and outdoor areas for much of the day. An impressive selection of toys and resources are provided and these are extremely invitingly presented. Children confidently select equipment from the low level storage and enthusiastically join in the tidying up, putting everything in it's right place.

The pre-school setting maintains all of the required documentation for the safe and efficient running of it's service.

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

A great sense of fun and friendship is evident throughout the pre-school. Children are beautifully behaved and show great consideration and caring with their peers, following the very positive role modelling of staff. Staff listen with genuine interest as children happily recount stories from home or share their opinions. They also use very good body language, smiles and warm eye contact to ensure that children feel safe, secure and welcome. This helps the children to develop very good self-esteem and gives them the confidence to experiment and investigate without fear of failure. As a result, children are becoming very independent in their learning and display extremely good social skills.

Children enjoy a very good mix of free play and more directed activities. They have a very broad range of activities on offer each day covering all areas of their development. They have regular opportunities to express themselves creatively and show great concentration as they carefully and precisely glue collages, paint pictures and create their own superhero gauntlets. Whilst the benefits of their freely expressive art is clearly understood and promoted by staff, there are times when the aim to send children home with a product results in slightly too much adult direction. For example by drawing and cutting out flowers for the children to decorate for Mothers Day. However, this is not reflective of the high quality of the support that children generally receive to promote their knowledge, understanding and creative skills.

Charming conversations take place throughout the setting which help to develop children's language skills. Staff regularly sit and read stories with small groups of children, helping them to develop a love of books. This is evident as a child proudly states that she can read and proceeds to turn the pages of her favourite book, reciting the story virtually verbatim, complete with voice intonation and facial expressions. Children also demonstrate good problem solving and reasoning skills as they use wooden bricks to design and build elaborate constructions and also to assemble complex train tracks.

Cameras are regularly used by staff and children are also encouraged to take photos. They also have access to a computer and are learning to use a mouse and keyboard to operate educational programmes. In addition to gaining competency in using IT equipment, children have opportunities to develop other practical skills such as wiping tables, cooking and growing plants. This helps them to prepare for the challenges that they will face as they move on to school. The support that

children receive to learn about and respect diversity also helps to ensure that they are confident to interact with people who will later become their friends, neighbours and colleagues.

Children are given good support to learn about the importance of personal hygiene and healthy living. They routinely wash their hands after using the toilet and before eating, use tissue to blow their nose and are taught about the importance of good dental hygiene. Those who stay all day bring in packed lunches from home and all children enjoy nutritious snacks during the morning and afternoon. Drinks are constantly available. Regular opportunities exist for all children to take part in physical activities both in the group room and in the imaginatively designed garden areas.

Appropriate procedures are in place to care for children who become unwell and also to administer medication if necessary. First aid trained staff are present at all times ensuring that children can be treated in case of a minor accident.

## 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

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

### The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

<b>How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?</b>	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

<b>Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	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