

Little Acorns Pre-School

Kingsnorth Recreation Centre, Field View, Kingsnorth, Ashford, Kent, TN23 3AQ



Inspection date	16 September 2016
Previous inspection date	28 November 2012

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	Good	2
	Previous inspection:	Good	2
Effectiveness of the leadership and management		Good	2
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Good	2
Personal development, behaviour and welfare		Good	2
Outcomes for children		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents

This provision is good

- Children are confident, settled and happy. They enjoy a range of interesting and stimulating activities and resources, both indoors and in the garden. Staff interact with children with enthusiasm, warmth and care.
- The manager is thorough and reflective. She has a clear vision for continuous improvement for the pre-school and has plans in place to develop further.
- Staff are particularly skilled at developing children's language skills. For example, staff and children engage in interesting conversations, share opinions and listen well.
- The staff work well as a team. They all know the children well and the effective key-person system helps ensure that activities take account of individual children's learning needs and interests. Children make good progress.
- Children behave well in the setting. They are considerate and polite with staff and with each other.
- The manager and staff develop good relationships with parents and encourage them to participate in their children's learning. For example, families borrow books from the pre-school to read at home.

It is not yet outstanding because:

- On occasions, staff do not encourage and extend older children's early writing skills.
- Some shared information gained through staff training is not rapidly embedded in the practice of all staff to raise children's outcomes further.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- extend the opportunities to encourage children's early writing experiences further
- make better use of information gained through training to strengthen staff practice and improve children's outcomes even more.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed the children taking part in planned and freely chosen activities.
- The inspector held a meeting with the manager.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation with the manager.
- The inspector spoke to staff, children and parents.
- The inspector sampled relevant documentation, including summaries of children's progress and the self-evaluation.

Inspector

Lucy Whitestone

Inspection findings

Effectiveness of the leadership and management is good

Safeguarding is effective. The manager and staff fully understand their roles and responsibilities in keeping children safe and know the action to take if there are any concerns for children's welfare. The manager is aware of the strengths of the pre-school and includes the views of staff and parents. The manager effectively supports staff through regular individual meetings where they monitor children's progress together to identify any learning gaps. She identifies staff training needs to support teaching skills. For example, recent training on how boys play resulted in purposeful and imaginative 'superhero' activities in the garden. Staff found this engaged boys more in imaginative play and improved their behaviour.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

There is a good balance between adult-planned activities and those that children choose themselves. For example, children independently access resources and decide how to use them, such as building roadways for their trucks with wooden blocks. Staff take note of such interests and plan individualised next steps in children's learning. Young children enjoy actively taking part in activities, such as during story time as they use puppets and feel the different textures on the pages. Staff support children's language skills in all activities and use a variety of methods, such as songs, visual cues and signs, to encourage their speech and increase children's vocabulary. Staff encourage children to use and understand mathematical language in their play, for example, when they talk about the biggest and smallest as they compare their modelling-dough creations.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare are good

Children settle well and staff carefully support children's engagement in activities. For example, a visual timetable helps new children understand routines. Children are confident in meeting their own needs. For example, they peel and cut bananas at the snack table and enjoy the challenge of zipping up their coats and putting up umbrellas when it rains. All children like to play in the fresh air, where there is a range of physical opportunities for exploring, including a 'mud kitchen' and a seed-planting area. Children listen carefully to staff and to each other, and receive regular praise for their efforts. They learn to respect and value people's differences and similarities.

Outcomes for children are good

Children are keen to investigate. For example, they explore the sounds of musical instruments, experiment with making rhythms and examine the patterns in their strings of dough beads. Children develop positive skills for their future learning, such as taking turns and sharing resources. They learn to recognise their name, for instance when they register themselves in as they arrive.

Setting details

Unique reference number	127324
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	1058740
Type of provision	Sessional provision
Day care type	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Age range of children	2 - 5
Total number of places	30
Number of children on roll	50
Name of registered person	Little Acorns Pre-School Committee
Registered person unique reference number	RP908652
Date of previous inspection	28 November 2012
Telephone number	01233 503843

Little Acorns Pre-School registered in 1998. The pre-school is situated on the edge of the Park Farm Estate in Ashford, Kent. The pre-school receives funding to provide free early education for children aged two, three and four years. It is open each weekday from 9.15am to 3pm, during school term time only. There are nine staff employed and, of these, eight hold a recognised childcare qualification at level 3. The staff team is supported by an administrator.

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