

# Little Acorns

Acorns Playgroup, Evershot Village Hall, The Common, Evershot, Dorchester, Dorset,  
DT2 0JY



|                          |                   |
|--------------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Inspection date</b>   | 18 September 2017 |
| Previous inspection date | 28 November 2016  |

|   | <b>This inspection:</b> | <b>Requires improvement</b> | <b>3</b> |
|---|-------------------------|-----------------------------|----------|
| <b>The quality and standards of the early years provision</b> | Previous inspection:    | Requires Improvement        | 3        |
| Effectiveness of the leadership and management                |                         | Requires improvement        | 3        |
| Quality of teaching, learning and assessment                  |                         | Requires improvement        | 3        |
| Personal development, behaviour and welfare                   |                         | Requires improvement        | 3        |
| Outcomes for children   |                         | Requires improvement        | 3        |

## Summary of key findings for parents

### This provision requires improvement. It is not yet good because:

- The provider has not informed Ofsted of changes to the management committee to enable checks to be completed on their suitability. This is also a breach of the Childcare Register requirements.
- The manager does not ensure all staff know how to use boys' interests effectively to motivate and challenge them consistently in their literacy and mathematical development. Some activities lack stimulus for older boys to support good progress in all areas of their development and prepare them for school effectively.
- Staff have not established strong working partnerships with other providers that children attend to ensure a consistent approach to their learning and development.
- Staff do not provide effective support for children to listen and engage fully in adult-led group activities.
- Staff miss opportunities for children to make predications and test their ideas.

### It has the following strengths

- The new management committee and recently appointed manager have begun to review the provision and identify the most important priorities to improve outcomes for children. For example, they have started to provide frequent supervision for staff and have identified the most effective actions for staff development. However, this is in the early stages and has not had a big enough impact.
- Children are confident and emotionally secure at the pre-school. They have strong friendships and a positive awareness of people's differences.

## What the setting needs to do to improve further

### To meet the requirements of the early years foundation stage and the Childcare Register the provider must:

|   | <b>Due Date</b> |
|---|-----------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ ensure all members of the management committee complete the correct process so that Ofsted can carry out suitability checks</li> </ul>   | 31/10/2017      |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ improve staff skills in knowing how to use the interests of older boys to help them progress in their literacy and mathematical development to prepare them better for school</li> </ul> | 31/10/2017      |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ develop partnerships with other providers to enable a two-way flow of information to improve consistency in children's learning and development.</li> </ul>                              | 31/10/2017      |

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

- support children further in concentrating and engaging fully in group activities
- help children to make predications and test their ideas.

### Inspection activities

- The inspector observed activities and the quality of teaching indoors and outdoors.
- The inspector spoke with staff, children and parents at the inspection.
- The inspector held a meeting with the provider and manager, took account of their self-evaluation and carried out a joint observation.
- The inspector checked safeguarding information and the safety of the premises.
- The inspector sampled documentation, including policies and procedures, children's development records and planning.

### Inspector

Elaine Douglas

## Inspection findings

### Effectiveness of the leadership and management requires improvement

Safeguarding is effective. The manager and staff understand their responsibilities and know what to do if a child is at risk of harm or exposed to extreme views. The provider failed to notify Ofsted of changes to the management committee within the required timescale. However, there is no impact on children's safety because members of the committee are never on their own with children. Through training, the manager has improved the planning to focus on children's individual learning needs, and she gains more information on their starting points. She now knows where children need additional support. However, she does not ensure that the quality of teaching always has a positive impact on older boys to prepare them effectively for school. Staff have strong partnerships with parents and they share information to support children's development. However, the manager has not established effective partnerships with other providers to know how to provide fully consistent care and learning.

### Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

Since the last inspection, there have been some improvements in the quality of teaching. However, staff are not secure in using older boys' interests to motivate them to take part in activities they show less interest in to narrow gaps in their development successfully. For example, when older boys did not use the activities staff had planned for writing and mathematics, staff did not consider more creative ways to use their interests to engage them. Some boys enjoyed sorting items by colour, but staff missed opportunities to extend their understanding of total numbers, use mathematical language or explore 'more' and 'less'. Children are inquisitive and staff provide effective support for their language and communication skills. However, they do not consistently extend activities to encourage children to make predictions and test their ideas.

### Personal development, behaviour and welfare require improvement

Overall, children behave well. However, they do not consistently engage fully in group activities, loose interest and sometimes become distracted. Nevertheless, children enjoy their time at pre-school and make independent choices about what they want to do and where they want to play. They have daily opportunities to be outdoors and develop an awareness of safe and healthy practices. For example, they pour themselves drinks of fresh water, wash their hands before eating, and practise the emergency evacuation procedures. Staff support children well in managing tasks to develop their physical skills and independence, such as screwing lids on and off containers and cutting fruit for snack.

### Outcomes for children require improvement

Children make steady progress and develop the basic skills they need for school. However, older boys do not make as much progress as they could in all areas, and children do not receive consistent support in their learning and development as staff do not know what they learn when they are at other settings. Children engage well in playing imaginatively with others and are strong communicators. For example, they pretend to cook and pass each other play ingredients they need, such as eggs and milk. Children enjoy using books independently and confidently ask staff to read to them.

## Setting details

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Unique reference number</b>                   | EY281575  |
| <b>Local authority</b>                           | Dorset  |
| <b>Inspection number</b>                         | 1079524   |
| <b>Type of provision</b>                         | Full-time provision   |
| <b>Day care type</b>                             | Childcare - Non-Domestic  |
| <b>Registers</b>                                 | Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register |
| <b>Age range of children</b>                     | 2 - 4   |
| <b>Total number of places</b>                    | 26  |
| <b>Number of children on roll</b>                | 8   |
| <b>Name of registered person</b>                 | Little Acorns Playgroup (Evershot) Committee                                      |
| <b>Registered person unique reference number</b> | RP901866  |
| <b>Date of previous inspection</b>               | 28 November 2016  |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                          | 07985 435 958   |

Little Acorns opened in 1984 and re-registered at the current premises in 2004. The setting operates on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 8.45am to 2.45pm and on Thursdays from 8.45am to 12.45pm, during term time only. The setting receives funding to provide free early education for three- and four-year-old children. The parent committee employs three members of staff. Of these, two staff hold an early years qualification at level 3 and one staff member has a qualification at level 2.

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