

Inspection of Little Acorns Pre School

140 Sidegate Lane, Ipswich, Suffolk IP4 4JD

Inspection date: 27 September 2019

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good
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What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children are happy, safe and settled. Parents talk about the friendliness of staff and how much their children look forward to attending. They comment on the help and support they receive from the setting to promote children's development, for instance in potty training. Generally, children behave well. Staff act as positive role models for them, demonstrating good manners and kindness. However, at times, children do not respond to staff instructions or recognise the impact their actions have on others.

Children move confidently around the setting. They make choices about what they want to do next and transport resources from one area to another. Children are creative and explore different ways to use equipment. For example, they mix and sieve sand with kitchen utensils, then use those same pots, spoons and sieves to create a noisy drum kit.

Children challenge their physical skills as they run, climb and build in the garden. They use drainpipes to create runs for their toy cars, climb over the climbing frame and crawl through the tunnel. Children enjoy opportunities to be independent. For example, at snack time they serve themselves, cut up fruit and butter their bread. Children wash up their plates when they are finished.

What does the early years setting do well and what does it need to do better?

- The management team recently increased opportunities for staff to build on their professional development. Staff access various online courses to improve their skills and knowledge. This helps to promote positive outcomes for children.
- Staff regularly review children's progress in learning. They use this information to make a plan for each child which includes activities to support their next steps in learning and meet their individual interests. Since the last inspection, staff have successfully strengthened arrangements for regularly sharing updates about children's learning with parents. However, strategies to involve and engage all parents are not always successful.
- Children can count confidently and develop their understanding of the quantity associated with each number symbol. They count the number of berries on their plate at snack time and select a numbered peg to hang their bag on.
- Staff provide a wide variety of resources for children to practise mark-making skills with. For instance, children delight in using clipboards and pens to create drawings and 'do writing'. They enjoy using rollers and large brushes to create large, colourful paintings on the outdoor easel.
- At times, staff do not provide sufficient guidance to help children understand how to manage their own behaviour within the boundaries and expectations of the setting.

- The management team and staff reflect on the provision they offer children and families. They meet regularly to share ideas and plan novel experiences to introduce new opportunities to children. For example, staff share interesting objects from other countries and show children where to find places on a map.
- Staff read to children in an exciting and engaging manner. They repeat key phrases and new vocabulary to help build on children's understanding. Children have quiet moments in the cosy outdoor 'book house' to look at books with their friends. They pretend to read stories to one another, and older children recall key phrases from familiar books.
- Staff promote children's thinking skills and understanding of the world well. For example, during an activity to make birdfeeders, they encourage children to think about ways they can attach the feeders to trees. Children explore tying loops and bending wire to make hooks. Staff talk to children about birds being hungry during winter months as there are less insects for them to eat.
- Children play imaginatively. They pretend mesh flower baskets are helmets and staff encourage them to 'blast off' to the moon on a spaceship they create from chairs and wooden pallets. Older children explore familiar experiences, such as visiting the doctor, in their play. They take turns to be the doctor and the patient and declare that their friends are, 'All better now,' after treating them with blankets and pretend medicine.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff know the signs that may indicate a child is at risk of harm. They understand how to identify and report concerns. The manager ensures staff regularly refresh their child protection training and keep their knowledge up to date through briefings at staff meetings. When appointing new staff, the management team follow thorough recruitment processes to ensure that staff are suitable. Staff complete checks of the indoor and outdoor environments and equipment to ensure children can play safely. They also have secure procedures in place to support children with allergies and dietary requirements.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- provide more consistent guidance to support children's understanding of expectations and help them learn how to manage their own behaviour
- strengthen strategies to engage all parents in their children's learning and development.

Setting details

Unique reference number	251558
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	10072660
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children	2 to 4
Total number of places	50
Number of children on roll	71
Name of registered person	Little Acorns Pre-School Committee
Registered person unique reference number	RP904767
Telephone number	01473 712236
Date of previous inspection	28 January 2016

Information about this early years setting

Little Acorns Pre School registered in 1994. The pre-school employs 16 members of childcare staff. Of these, 12 hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 and above, including three at level 6. The pre-school opens Monday to Friday, from 9am until 3pm, term time only. The pre-school provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector
Kate Oakley

Inspection activities

- The manager and one of the deputy managers took the inspector on a learning walk across both buildings and all outdoor areas of the setting to understand how the early years provision and curriculum is organised.
- The inspector observed the quality of teaching during activities, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact this has on children's learning.
- The manager and the inspector carried out and evaluated a joint observation.
- The inspector spoke to children and staff at appropriate times during the inspection. She also took account of the views of parents spoken to during the inspection and through written feedback provided.
- The manager and the inspector held a meeting. The inspector looked at relevant documentation and reviewed evidence of the suitability of all persons working on the premises.

We carried out this inspection under sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of provision that is registered on the Early Years Register. The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and care, known as the early years foundation stage.

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