

Little Acorns Day Nursery Ltd

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	EY104025
Inspection date	03/08/2009
Inspector	Deborah Ball
Setting address	Cooks Lane, Kingstone, Hereford, HR2 9EY
Telephone number	01981 250 714
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Type of setting	Childcare on non-domestic premises

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.

Description of the setting

Little Acorns Nursery was registered in 2002. It operates from purposefully converted premises in the village of Kingstone in Herefordshire. The nursery serves both local and surrounding areas. There is an enclosed area available for outdoor play. The nursery is open each weekday from 7.30am to 5.30pm all year round. Children are able to attend for a variety of sessions.

A maximum of 48 children may attend the setting at any one time. There are currently 47 children attending who are within the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). The setting is in receipt of nursery education funding. The provision is registered by Ofsted on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. The nursery supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 12 staff who hold appropriate early years qualifications and five part-time support staff. One member of staff has achieved Early Years Professional Status and has a B.A. (Hons) Degree in Integrated Childhood Studies, two members of staff are working towards the Foundation Degree in Early Years and another member of staff is working towards the Foundation Degree in Learning Support. The nursery is a member of the National Day Nurseries Association and holds a Quality Assurance Award at Bronze level. The setting receives support from the local authority.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding. All practitioners have exceptionally high aspirations for quality, which is reflected in the setting's daily practice and is evident from the plans for ongoing improvements. From the outset, strong relationships are established with parents as staff work closely with them to support, guide and nurture their children. As a result, the setting is highly effective at making sure children make excellent progress in all areas of their learning and development and are fully included in the life of the nursery. The welfare requirements are used to best effect in creating a healthy, safe and stimulating environment where children learn and develop to their full potential.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the high quality early years provision the registered person should consider:

- implement the areas for improvement as highlighted in ongoing self-evaluation to consolidate and continue to improve the excellent outcomes for children.

The leadership and management of the early years provision

The high aspirations of the owner motivate practitioners to achieve outstanding outcomes for children. All practitioners have a shared vision of what they hope children will achieve and work effectively and collaboratively to ensure that children experience consistently high quality care and education that is tailored to meet their individual needs. A culture of reflective practice, evaluation, forward thinking and informed discussion with parents, practitioners and other agencies are used effectively and successfully to maintain and improve the experiences offered to children and to plan improvements that are firmly based on the outcomes for children and their families. Consequently the recommendations from the last inspection have been robustly addressed and there is an ongoing action plan for improvements. The owner fully involves all practitioners in the decision-making process, resulting in excellent teamwork and a superb atmosphere of co-operation and ownership of all that happens in the nursery. Practitioners speak enthusiastically of their enjoyment of working at the nursery and of the encouragement they receive to gain further knowledge through access to training and formal qualifications.

Adults consistently give the highest priority to safeguarding children. Extensive recruitment and vetting procedures, including the successful induction of new practitioners, ensure children are safeguarded exceptionally well. There is a comprehensive awareness of safeguarding issues among the adults within the nursery, all of whom receive regular training on safeguarding. The nursery's collaborative working with key agencies is exemplary. Comprehensive policies and procedures are implemented consistently and robustly to ensure any concerns are priorities and dealt with effectively. The premises are safe and secure, children are well supervised by practitioners who are vigilant about children's safety and follow excellent procedures in relation to health and hygiene.

Extremely strong and supportive partnerships with parents and others fully enable a consistent, sympathetic and sensitive care approach. Parents and carers are very well informed about all aspects of their own children's achievement, well-being and development. The nursery provides tailored guidance and information about precise ways parents and carers can support their children's learning across different areas. The highly inclusive systems of communication ensure that there are consistent and productive partnerships with parents and carers, resulting in strong levels of engagement with the nursery's work. The nursery constantly seeks the views of parents and carers by asking them to complete a questionnaire about how satisfied they are with the provision and asking for their views on how they can improve. Results from the questionnaire are incorporated into the nursery's action plans. Information evenings for parents and carers have been held to explain the new EYFS framework and how they can be involved with their child's learning. Parents' evenings and open days are held throughout the year when parents and carers can meet with practitioners to discuss their child's progress and future plans. Children's learning journals are sent home regularly and parents and carers are asked to make comments and suggestions on the next steps for their child's learning. Parents are valued contributors to their child's individual learning

journey promoting a highly effective system for a two-way flow of information about children's progress. The parents and carers are invited to share any particular interests or skills that they have with the children and spend time in the nursery. The nursery is highly committed to working in partnership with others and takes a lead role in establishing effective working relationships. With parental permission, the nursery works with other professionals to benefit the welfare of individual children. These include practitioners from other settings, special educational needs co-ordinators, health professionals and staff from the local children's centre. Excellent procedures are in place to identify and support children with learning difficulties and disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language. This ensures that every child receives support consistent with their unique needs. Partnerships with local schools are fully effective and support children's smooth transition from nursery to school.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Children develop to their full potential because of outstanding early years practice. The exceptional organisation of the educational programmes reflects rich, varied and imaginative experiences that meet the needs of all children exceedingly well. Practitioners work closely with families and other professionals to ensure that children enjoy a secure, safe, exciting and truly individual learning experience in their earliest years. Children play a dynamic role in their learning, offering ideas in planning their learning experiences and responding to challenges with great enthusiasm. Staff link the children's ideas to objectives in the six areas of learning and development in the EYFS framework and ensure that a balance of child-initiated activities and adult-led teaching is provided. Planning is reviewed, adapted and developed in response to children's needs to ensure they consistently feel secure within their environment and develop a positive sense of self-esteem. Assessment through high quality observations is rigorous and the information gained is used very effectively to guide planning.

Babies are beginning to develop their early fundamental skills and actively explore their surroundings with curiosity and interest. For example, they use all their senses to explore and investigate treasure boxes of objects with a range of textures and weights. Heuristic play with everyday objects such as plastic cups, curtain rings, cardboard tubes, ribbons and chains provide children with opportunities to explore schemas, develop ideas, set themselves challenges and solve problems. Children have opportunities to explore and investigate the natural world and a range of sights, smells, sounds and textures. For example, they plant and tend flowers and vegetables, build dens and shelters and make large constructions with blocks, tyres, crates, planks and tubes. Children see numbers displayed within their care and learning environment, count confidently during everyday routines and their play and follow maths trails. All children are interested in books and listen intently to stories read to them by enthusiastic staff. Their imaginations are captured as they listen to the story, 'We're going on a bear hunt' and recreate the bear's journey. Staff engage in high quality adult-child interactions to encourage, support and extend children's speech and language development. Signing and gesture are used to support all children to communicate effectively. French is taught from an early age, and this adds richness to children's

vocabulary as they learn to sing, count and repeat simple phrases in a different language. Children's creativity is developing extremely well through arts and crafts and imaginative role play. For example, children enjoy opportunities for large scale art work, create music, dance and engage in action rhymes. Children have free access to information, communication and technology (ICT) equipment such as award-winning educational robots. They make excellent use of telephones to act out making calls to each other, taking messages and recording these on notepads with a range of writing implements. Older children take and print photographs they wish to include in their learning journeys. Children help plan and resource the role play area and practitioners ensure that it not only supports children's creative development but also provides rich and meaningful opportunities for other areas of learning. For example, the children decided that they would like a cafe which offered opportunities for developing early writing skills through producing menus and signs and numeric skills through counting items and using mathematical language. Children engage in a wide range of activities and experiences, which help them to value diversity.

Children have innovative opportunities to engage in a wide range of physical activities, both indoors and out and gain a secure understanding about the importance of regular exercise as part of maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Babies and very young children are extremely content and settled because their individual health, physical and dietary needs are met to an exceptional standard. Freshly prepared, healthy meals and snacks are provided throughout the day. Mealtimes are a social occasion, where children are able to develop their social skills and independence. Children enjoy fresh air and exercise everyday through frequent access to the outdoor play areas and walks into the village to the local park. The children learn, through daily routines, simple good health and hygiene practices and the importance of personal hygiene, developing independence and responsibility for their own self-care needs such as toileting and hand washing. Children display an excellent awareness of safety issues, recognise and understand how to keep themselves safe.

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

Overall effectiveness

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	1
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	1

Leadership and management

How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	1
How effective is the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement?	1
How well does the setting work in partnership with parents and others?	1
How well are children safeguarded?	1

Quality and standards

How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?	1
How well are children helped to stay safe?	1
How well are children helped to be healthy?	1
How well are children helped to enjoy and achieve?	1
How well are children helped to make a positive contribution?	1
How well are children helped develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	1

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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