

Little Acorns

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number 160648
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Inspector David Gutmann

Setting address Pine Ridge Infant and Nursery School, Esher Road, Old Dean Estate, Camberley, Surrey, GU15 4AW
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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 report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration whichever is the later, which require Ofsted or the provider to take action in Annex C.

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 opened in 2001 to care for children under eight attending Pine Ridge Nursery and School. Its pre-nursery group opened in 2002. The provision is managed by a management committee. Little Acorns meets in a self-contained building which is set in the grounds of Pine Ridge School in Camberley in Surrey. Children have access to two large playrooms and an enclosed outdoor play area.

Little Acorns is on the Early Years Register and both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. The group is registered to care for a maximum of 26 children aged from two years to under eight years. Little Acorns opens Monday to Friday during school term-times only. The 'Fun before Nine' group operates from 08.30 to 08.55, and the pre-nursery group operates from 09.00 to 11.30, with the option of an extended session until 13.00. Wrap around care is also available for children attending Pine Ridge Nursery. The majority of children move from Little Acorns pre-nursery to Pine Ridge Nursery. There are currently 26 children on roll in the pre-nursery, with 12 on the waiting list. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting welcomes children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language. Five members of staff, two of whom are full-time, work with the children. Two hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 2 and one is working towards their level three. The manager holds a level 3 qualification and is working towards their early years professional status. The deputy supervisor has an NNEB qualification at level 3. The setting receives support from the Early Years and Childcare Service and the school nursery.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Little Acorns provides a safe and secure environment where the learning and development needs of young children are successfully met. Children are cared for by well trained staff who have their interests at heart and manage behaviour well. The well organised staff team has created a positive and organised environment in which children can have fun but also make good progress towards the early learning goals, through a combination of self-exploration and well planned daily and weekly activities. Those children who have special language needs receive effective extra support, and there are good partnerships and links with the neighbouring school's special needs coordinator, who is readily available for advice and support. Issues for continuous improvement centre around finding ways to develop the learning of individuals and groups even more, and extending the use of the outdoor area. There is good capacity to improve. The staff continually seek ways to develop individuals and groups of children, as well as improving resources and the quality of the outside area.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- provide better facilities in the outdoor area
- use assessments consistently from weekly plans to extend the learning of all children

The leadership and management of the early years provision

This early years setting is well led and managed and has improved considerably over the past few years. Children receive good quality care and education, supported by staff whose deployment is higher than the nationally recommended ratio. Staff are fully aware of safeguarding requirements and ensure children are always safe and secure. This results in children's welfare needs being well met. Staff act cohesively as a team. They accurately evaluate the setting's effectiveness, monitor the impact of its provision on the children, and check that the specific needs set out in the five Every Child Matters outcomes are being met. Staff have high expectations and are continually planning to increase the rigour of self-evaluation further. Records are rigorously kept and updated, including those necessary to meet the requirements of the Childcare Register. Every Friday, key workers plan activities for their children for the following week. Observations are increasingly used in planning, although there is still some inconsistency. Policies are made available to parents, who also have good access to their child's 'Learning Journey Profile'. The partnership with parents has grown stronger since the last inspection, so that parents now act as partners in planning their children's learning. Issues from the last inspection relating to planning activities using assessments and the need to develop parents' involvement in planning have been addressed. The home-link book is an outstanding feature which is proving very useful to parents and staff. Staff have developed increasingly effective partnerships with other local organisations, visitors and health workers.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision is good. Children are making good progress towards the early learning goals, helped by hard working staff who have a good knowledge of the learning and development requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). The staff do their best to make sure children enjoy learning by making activities fun. Staff have warm, caring relationships with the children, who, on the day of the inspection, were mostly two- and three-year-olds. They were making good progress, as evidenced by their individual achievement files. Most children leave the setting to go to the nursery and infant school on the same site. Staff are aware of those children who have only recently joined and take pains to find out what they know and can do from parents. Planned activities are roughly evenly split between those planned by staff and those which children can freely access. Inevitably, during the observed period, several children spent a lot of time on some activities and little on others. There were times when the staff missed opportunities to guide activities for specific groups in order to extend their vocabulary or problem-solving skills. Children's personal social and emotional development is helped by effective weekly and daily plans which are tailored to the needs of each child. The setting is well organised by the staff, who change equipment around each day to meet the needs of the individual children attending,

as most children on roll come for two days. The staff set out activities for the children to choose from and these are closely linked to the EYFS areas of learning. For example, a water container with a number of different sized bowls and buckets helps children improve their problem-solving and reasoning skills. Circle time is well used by the manager of the setting to reinforce the meaning of day-to-day words connected to 'My Calendar'. Children are encouraged to match shapes to words, such as 'sun', and learn about the weather to gain knowledge and understanding about the world. The manager encourages a small group to play with a small model of the manger in which Jesus was born and repeat some key words as part of the build up to Christmas. Interesting wall-mounted collages, such as a 'nature table' with sticks and leaves, are evidence of children's exploration in the outside play area. This is having a positive impact on the children's knowledge of the natural world around them. Children can access tools, such as scissors, and use them safely in supervised activities, such as making a Santa wish list using photographs of presents from catalogues. They are keen to experiment with foam, sand and water, and make their own designs in a variety of colours on the computer, showing the ability to recognise shapes and numbers. Some children make shapes of stars using playdough and can talk about what they are doing, and this is successful in encouraging the children to talk and listen to others. Staff organise stimulating activities which children enjoy. Children gain confidence in relating to others and their surroundings. They work alongside other children happily, and some are beginning to form friendship bonds. Children behave well, showing good attitudes to learning. Staff expectations of good behaviour have been communicated to parents to ensure consistency. Parents communicate closely with staff through the outstanding home-link books, in which one parent wrote '... settled in well and told me about the Thomas the Tank book he read and how he was playing with cars'. The children respond well to the adults' continual encouragement and praise, effected through a warm and caring relationship from staff. The high quality of the planned activities, which are linked to both the early learning goals and children's individual needs, provide sufficient challenge for the children. Outdoor play helps children create simple representations of events, such as wheeling a supermarket trolley or taking a car through a carwash, very well supported by questioning designed to open minds and extend the children's thinking. The staff are becoming more experienced at using observations to plan the next steps for learning, for example, using post-it notes to pass on achievements to key workers. Every Friday, key workers plan their children's activities for the following week. Using observation to plan was an issue from the last inspection, and, although it still needs to be more consistent, it has improved greatly. The range of activities that can be planned and their flexibility is, however, restricted by the limited equipment in the outdoor play area. The surface of this area is also unsuitable for children's use in some parts, particularly during wet weather.

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?	2
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	2

Leadership and management

How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	2
How effective is the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement?	2
How well does the setting work in partnership with parents and others?	2
How well are children safeguarded?	2

Quality and standards

How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?	2
How well are children helped to stay safe?	2
How well are children helped to be healthy?	2
How well are children helped to enjoy and achieve?	2
How well are children helped to make a positive contribution?	2
How well are children helped develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	2

Any complaints about the inspection or report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

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

Annex C: complaint/s made to Ofsted

This section of the report includes details of any complaint/s made to Ofsted when:

- we took action for the provider to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register; or
- we asked the provider to take action in order to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register; or
- the provider had already taken any necessary action to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register.

We will not report on any complaint where the provider met the requirements of the Early Years Register or did not require any action by Ofsted or the registered provider.

Detail of the complaint/s

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since the last inspection.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.