

# Little Acorns Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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**Unique reference number** EY405875  
**Inspection date** 10/06/2010  
**Inspector** Alexandra Brouder

**Setting address** Little Acorns Nursery, 382 London Road, LEICESTER, LE2  
2PN

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**Type of setting** Childcare on non-domestic premises

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## 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).

Children only attend this setting before and/or after the school day and/or during the school holidays. The judgements in this report reflect the quality of early years provision offered to children during those periods.

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## Description of the setting

Little Acorns Nursery is one of five nurseries. It originally opened in 1990 and was re-registered with new owners in 2004, becoming a limited company in 2010. It operates from a large detached house near Leicester City centre and provides full day care for families from the locality and outlying areas. Access to the premises is by a small step. Some children are cared for on the first floor of the property which is accessed by stairs.

The provision is registered on the Early Years Register to care for a maximum of 52 children at any one time. There are currently 88 children aged from six months to under five years on roll. This includes 30 funded children. Children attend for a variety of sessions, either part-time or full-time. The setting supports children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery is open each weekday from 8:00am until 6:00 pm all year round with the exception of bank holidays. All children share access to a secure outdoor play area.

The organisation employs 16 staff. Of these, 12 hold appropriate early years qualification, with the remaining staff working towards a childcare qualification.

## The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children feel safe and happy at the nursery and as a result make good progress in their learning and development. Resources, such as toys and activities are well deployed to ensure that children are able to actively engage in their play. However, staff deployment is not always organised effectively. Staff know the children well and recognise them as unique individuals, which is achieved because they work closely with parents to understand children's changing needs. Policies and procedures are effective in the main to support children's care, learning and welfare. Staff have a secure knowledge and understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage and use planning and assessment to identify children's developmental needs although this is not always fully effective. Well-established systems for self-evaluation and reflective practice demonstrate a sound sense of commitment to maintain and drive further improvement.

## What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- review the system for staffing arrangements to ensure that these meet the needs of individual children, with regard to staff deployment
- review the risk assessment to make sure it covers anything with which a child may come into contact

- monitor the process for recording children's next steps in their learning more effectively to ensure that they are challenged appropriately in all six areas of learning.

## **The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision**

Staff have a good knowledge, with regard to recognising signs or symptoms of child abuse and neglect, and understand how to take appropriate action should they have concerns, supporting children's welfare and safety. In addition, robust recruitment and vetting systems ensure that all adults working with children are suitable to do so. All staff are trained in childcare or working towards a recognised qualification and undertake additional training in the form of first aid, equal opportunities and safeguarding to ensure they can meet the needs of children well. This demonstrates the setting's commitment to ensuring staff development and providing a quality service to children. Detailed risk assessments are in place to support children's safety and well-being in and around the setting, although these do not fully identify all hazards within the outdoor area. The manager and staff have worked hard to create a welcoming environment and staff's awareness of individual children helps them to settle well. The nursery is organised so that children of a similar age or developmental stage are cared for in small groups. In the main, organisation and deployment of resources is sound, enabling all children to access a good range of age and stage appropriate resources to support their learning. However, deployment of staff is not always organised effectively to best support children's individual needs.

Partnerships with parents and carers are good and formal and informal arrangements ensure that parents gain feedback on how their child has been each day. Good settling-in procedures are in place to ensure that children's needs are identified before they begin, enabling staff to provide an environment suited to their individual needs, supporting their inclusion. Children spend time visiting the setting before they begin, which is mirrored as children develop and move from room to room within the setting, supporting a smooth transition. The management team work well together to provide clear leadership to the staff, enabling them to work well as a team. Systems to identify and address any areas for development are in place, such as the use of self-evaluation and 'Quality Improvements Framework' to ensure staff reflect on practice and indicate areas for improvement. Parents and carers are encouraged to complete regular questionnaires which also feed into this process, enabling all to contribute to the continuous improvement of the setting. Effective systems are in place to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and to ensure that children for whom English is an additional language are fully included in all aspects of the setting. This supports children's overall development and progress and ensures that all children are enabled to fully participate and benefit from their time at the setting.

## The quality and standards of the early years provision and outcomes for children

Children in all areas of the nursery clearly feel safe and secure and are very happy and relaxed within the setting. This is well promoted through staff's warm and caring interactions. All children have sound space to move around freely and those of growing mobility are encouraged to move around their rooms through well placed resources, developing their independent walking. All children at the nursery have fun and are engaged in adult-led and child-initiated activities throughout the day, enabling them to make good progress in their learning. Staff take time to observe and record what children do in order to plan an environment suited to their individual needs and abilities. However, evidence to support how children's next steps are evaluated or how children are challenged effectively is not consistent. Parents are positively encouraged to review their child's developmental records and to add their own comments should they wish to or any progress they may have observed from home, contributing well to children's learning.

Children are happy and confident to attend the setting. Older children greet staff and peers by name, whilst babies clearly show recognition of familiar adults as they reach out their arms to them when arriving at the setting. Children behave well and have fun playing with their peers and staff. They have many opportunities to self-select resources and do so at appropriate times, for example, as children were observed to play in the 'café' and obtain further resources to support this, such as different foods and enjoyed 'served' these to one another. Children's language and literacy skills are developing well. Staff regularly create opportunities to sit with the children to look at books in groups and on an individual basis. Children sit well and listen to taped stories and some children know that the page needs to be turned on the book when they hear the 'beep'. Their mark-making skills develop as they write down orders at the café, make swirls in the shaving foam and chalk on the paving slabs in the garden.

Children's creative skills are developing well as for example, babies spend time exploring simple musical instruments, bouncing up and down and smiling as they become excited by the noise that they make. Older babies play with developmentally appropriate toys and everyday objects and enjoy sticking activities with different materials and handling custard gloop. They use their imagination well and staff use their knowledge of children's interests to develop this further, for example, in providing children with a pretend bus, which children were observed to 'sit in' and 'ride' to their various destinations. Children of all ages begin to problem solve. For example, babies are observed to attempt to push various shapes through matching holes and are highly praised when they are successful, whilst older children use a range of different sized puzzles and construction equipment, persevering until they complete their desired task. Songs and rhymes are used regularly to introduce children to number and counting, as are every day tasks, such as 'how many children at the table' and then asking 'how many plates do we need'. This enables children to think about number and simple calculation.

Children's awareness of the world in which they live develops as a range of visitors come into the setting, such as doctors, police officers and a dentist, enabling

children to learn about various topics, such as being healthy and road safety. They engage in planting activities in the garden to enable them to learn about nature and have completed topics on mini-beasts and life cycles to develop their understanding of animals and insects. Older children enjoy looking at insects in the garden, as they pointed an insect out to the inspector and stated 'look, it's a bug with lots of wriggly legs'. All children have regular access to the outdoors and staff plan well for this as children are observed to play with the shaving foam in a low level tub, golf clubs, play dough and a range of ride-ons and scooters.

## 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*

### The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

<b>How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?</b>	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	2

### The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	3
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding	2
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	2
The effectiveness of partnerships	2
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	2

### The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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### Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

<b>Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	2
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	2
The extent to which children feel safe	2
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	2
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	2

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