

Little Acorns Pre-school Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number

251558

Inspection date

05/10/2010

Inspector

Janet Keeling

Setting address

Sidegate Primary School, Sidegate Lane, Ipswich, Suffolk,
IP4 4JD

Telephone number

01473 712 236

Email

suecass@tiscali.co.uk

Type of setting

Childcare on non-domestic premises

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2010

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).

Please see our website for more information about each childcare provider. We publish inspection reports, conditions of registration and details of complaints we receive where we or the provider take action to meet the requirements of registration.

Description of the setting

Little Acorns Pre-School opened in 1994. It is committee run and has charitable status. The setting operates from a purpose built building located within the grounds of Sidegate Primary School in Ipswich. Children have access to an enclosed outdoor play area. The setting serves children and families from the local and surrounding areas.

The setting is registered by Ofsted on the Early Years Register. A maximum of 36 children from two to five years may attend the setting at any one time. There are currently 83 children on roll, all of whom are within the early years age group. The setting receives funding for early years education. Children attend for a variety of the sessions on offer. The setting opens from 9am to 3pm on a Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, and from 9am to 11.30am on a Wednesday, with the option of a lunch club each day from 11.30am to 12.30pm. The setting is open term times only.

The setting has procedures in place to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and for children who speak English as an additional language.

There are 15 members of staff who work directly with the children, of whom, 13 hold appropriate early years qualifications. The setting receives support from the local authority.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children are happy, confident and eager to learn at this very welcoming and child-friendly setting. Staff are motivated, work well as a team and have a good understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework, and consequently children make good progress in their learning and development. Successful partnerships with parents ensure that children's individual needs are fully supported. Links with other providers of the Early Years Foundation Stage, however, could be developed further. Practice is inclusive, supporting all children to actively participate in activities, which meet their individual interests and developmental needs. Children achieve well and systems to observe and support their learning are developing. The setting is led and managed by very motivated and committed managers who demonstrate a very positive attitude towards continuous improvement and have the capacity to secure effective progress.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- develop stronger links with other providers of the Early Years Foundation

- Stage in order to further support children's ongoing learning
- review and develop the assessment procedures to ensure that information gained through observation is regularly evaluated and used to identify children's next steps.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

All staff have an up-to-date understanding of safeguarding issues and are fully aware of the procedures to follow should they be concerned about a child in their care. Staff are very competent, caring and demonstrate a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Effective procedures for the recruitment and vetting of staff are in place, together with good procedures for the induction process. Managers and staff are trained in health and safety issues. Risk assessments are completed and cover all aspects of the indoor environment and the outdoor area. Staff routinely verify the identity of all visitors to the setting and have a visitors' book in place. There are also effective procedures in place for the safe arrival and collection of children. Staff are deployed effectively to ensure children are supervised safely at all times. Positive outcomes for children are due to the good use of time, space and resources.

Managers and staff are very motivated and passionate about their work and strive to improve practice at all times. For example, through the introduction of their self-evaluation system they have started to monitor and evaluate the quality and standards of the setting's practice. Staff have access to ongoing training to ensure that their knowledge and skills are updated regularly and all have completed paediatric first aid and safeguarding training. Regular staff meetings provide valuable opportunities for staff to discuss any practice issues and to identify any training needs, whilst weekly planning meetings ensure that staff have quality time to plan the next week's programme of activities. Recommendations made at the last inspection have been fully addressed and have had a positive impact on outcomes for children in the setting. A positive equality and diversity policy outlines a commitment to promoting inclusive practice, ensuring all children can achieve as well as they can regardless of their background. All staff demonstrate a strong commitment to working with external agencies to support the inclusion of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Positive links with the host school have been established, however, links with other providers of the Early Years Foundation Stage are still in their infancy.

Partnerships with parents are good. Children benefit from the warm and relaxed relationships that have been established between their parents and the staff. The staff dedicate time getting to know children and their families, fostering positive relationships and helping to ensure that children settle quickly and feel secure. The effective key person system, together with the pre-admission home visits, further support links between home and the setting. Parents are kept up to date with information regarding the group through the use of a parent notice board, regular parent meetings and newsletters. Parents are welcome to attend committee meetings and encouraged to support fund raising events throughout the year. Parents say that they are extremely happy with the care and learning opportunities

that are provided for their children and that staff are approachable, caring and supportive.

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

Children benefit from the staff's comprehensive knowledge and understanding of how to develop learning through play. They have good opportunities to make choices about their own learning and freely access a wide range of activities and resources, both indoors and outdoors. There is a good balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities that result in children being active learners, who are creative and able to think critically. This fosters enthusiasm, independence, curiosity and imagination amongst the children. Staff skilfully interact with the children and support them as they play, allowing children to work well independently and with their peers and to share their ideas. All children are valued and treated with equal concern, with any specific requirements being met sensitively through discussion with parents and other professionals. All children have a 'learning folder,' which contains both photographic and written information of children's learning, achievements and records of children's own work. However, children's starting points are not formally recorded and information gained through observation is not regularly evaluated and used to identify the next steps in a child's learning.

Children relate well to each other and to adults and arrive at the setting happy, confident and eager to learn. They enjoy first-hand learning experiences, for example, growing vegetables, such as lettuces, peas and radishes and watch with delight as they grow. They harvest the crop and enjoy tasting their vegetables at snack time. Children are developing a love for books. They have free access to the book corner and enjoy story time, where they listen carefully to tales such as 'The Itchy Bear'. Children are also encouraged to be part of a 'Book Scheme', where each child selects a book which they take home. They learn that print carries meaning as they self-register on arrival, use their name card at snack time and are encouraged to write their names on their own work. Music sessions are lively, and children sing along enthusiastically to songs, such as 'Twinkle Twinkle Little Star'. Individual creativity is fully supported through a range of role-play equipment, construction toys and access to a wide range of media. Children chat happily together as they engage in a painting activity. They skilfully squeeze paint into trays and make beautiful animal footprint pictures. Children's physical development is supported very well as they freely access an exciting and very well resourced outdoor area, where they confidently negotiate wooden stepping stones, pedal bikes, ride scooters and roll balls and cars down drain pipes and talk about which one goes the fastest.

Children develop an understanding of healthy eating as they engage in a range of activities and discussions with staff. They enjoy a wide variety of healthy snacks each day, such as oranges, apples and crackers with cheese spread. Children also have access to drinking water throughout the session. Staff use everyday opportunities to reinforce knowledge and understanding of safety. For example, children regularly engage in emergency evacuation procedures and are gently

reminded how to use equipment safely and not to run indoors. Hygienic behaviour is reinforced by staff and younger children are supported to wash and dry their hands before snacks, whilst the older children manage their personal care needs very well. Children are beginning to develop an understanding of the wider world through planned activities, discussion with staff and access to resources that are representative of diversity. They learn to negotiate, take turns with equipment and show consideration for others as they play together and as a result, children's behaviour is very good. Children develop a sense of responsibility as they help tidy away their toys and demonstrate that they are acquiring skills that will help them in the future and prepare them well for their transition into school.

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

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

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	2
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

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
--	---

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	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

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

