

# Inspection of Little Acorns Pre-School

Highfield Church Centre, Highfield Lane, SOUTHAMPTON SO17 1RL

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Inspection date: 11 March 2020

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

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The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Outstanding

## **What is it like to attend this early years setting?**

### **The provision is good**

Children consistently display good conduct. They behave well towards their friends; they are polite, thoughtful and quick to share toys. Children establish secure attachments and gravitate towards their key person when they arrive at pre-school in the morning. They settle into play with friends soon afterwards.

Children use their knowledge of the world when they engage in role play. This was evident as they decided to construct a building where they could hold parties for their small-world characters. Children developed a strategy to construct the building using blocks. They successfully achieved their aim. Children enjoy using their imagination. However, when they are designing pictures, they are not able to choose from a wide range of resources independently. This slightly limits creative possibilities.

Staff know that children are capable of achieving well, and they help them make good progress across the curriculum. Children develop good numeracy skills. During the inspection, staff encouraged children to sort and match bricks. Children added and subtracted different amounts. They estimated how high they could build their tower before it toppled over. Children guessed again if the first answer was incorrect.

Staff speak to parents about what children like to do at home. They incorporate children's unique interests into daily planning. All activities have a sense of purpose. However, sometimes, large-group activities do not meet the needs of all children.

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

- Staff establish strong connections with parents, and they communicate information about children's development. They frequently send home children's learning journals and encourage open dialogue about children's care. Staff help children refine new skills and make good progress in all areas of learning.
- Recently, staff have taught children about important people who help them in their local community. For example, a vet and a firefighter visited the pre-school. Children developed their understanding as they asked questions about different aspects of their job.
- Children are eager to participate, and they contribute to discussions. They know that it is important to listen to friends. They show this when they leave a gap so that friends can have their say. Staff routinely carry out larger-group activities. Although these start off very well, they can be slightly long; some children fidget and struggle to retain focus.
- Some children prefer to learn outdoors. Staff increased opportunities for children

to view both letters and numbers in the garden area. During the inspection, children cooperated with each other to sequence numbers. They created a hopscotch game on the patio and confidently shouted out numbers as they negotiated the large squares.

- Staff coordinate well with other professionals and practitioners involved in children's care. They seek the consent of parents and make rapid contact with staff at other childcare settings that share the care of children. They do this to provide children with consistent learning and care routines.
- The manager deploys staff well, and there is always a member of staff present to engage in conversation with children. Staff are sensitive to children's care needs. For example, they know which children require support to access snacks.
- Children practise their writing skills. This was evident when they carefully inscribed their names on pictures so they could easily identify them later. Children used natural resources, such as pine cones and plants, to distribute paint across paper. The resources were interesting. However, children did not have access to further creative resources. This meant that they were not able to choose how they wanted to enhance their own work.
- Staff access different types of training to continuously extend their professional skills and knowledge. For instance, they seek out appropriate online training and attend local courses. The manager is proactive in sharing all information, from local meetings that she attends, with staff, so that they always remain up to date on changes in the early years.
- Staff consistently promote effective hygiene procedures. For example, they modelled handwashing techniques for children to show them how to thoroughly cleanse their hands.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The manager implements thorough inductions for all new staff. She guides them through the pre-school's safeguarding policies and teaches them how to respond to different safeguarding scenarios. New staff have a good awareness of their roles and responsibilities. Experienced staff also refresh their knowledge of how to safeguard children on a frequent basis. They access training courses which highlight a broad range of safeguarding issues. All staff recognise that they play an important role in keeping children safe. They also understand the need to protect children's information. They know only to share sensitive safeguarding information with appropriate agencies.

## **What does the setting need to do to improve?**

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

- increase opportunities for children to fully explore creative resources and to

choose how they want to enhance their own projects

- monitor large-group activities to check they meet the needs of all children at all times.

## Setting details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	EY359829
<b>Local authority</b>	Southampton
<b>Inspection number</b>	10128729
<b>Type of provision</b>	Childcare on non-domestic premises
<b>Registers</b>	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
<b>Day care type</b>	Sessional day care
<b>Age range of children at time of inspection</b>	2 to 4
<b>Total number of places</b>	18
<b>Number of children on roll</b>	29
<b>Name of registered person</b>	Romilly, Carol
<b>Registered person unique reference number</b>	RP511966
<b>Telephone number</b>	07986716503
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	15 July 2015

## Information about this early years setting

Little Acorns Pre-School first opened in 1991 and re-registered in 2007. The group is privately owned and operates from a room in a church centre in Highfield, Southampton. The pre-school is in receipt of funding for early education for children aged three and four years. Sessions are from 9.15am to 12.15pm each weekday, term time only. There are four members of staff working with children. The manager and the deputy manager hold level 3 childcare qualifications. Another member of staff is qualified at level 6.

## Information about this inspection

**Inspector**  
Julie Bruce

## Inspection activities

- At the start of the inspection, the inspector and the manager took a learning walk. They discussed how staff plan the curriculum.
- The inspector met with parents. She asked their opinions about the pre-school.
- Staff discussed individual children with the inspector and the support they offer them.
- The inspector and manager evaluated the merits of a planned group activity.
- During a lunchtime meeting, the inspector and the manager discussed a range of topics. The inspector also checked appropriate documentation.

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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