

# Little Acorns (Herne) Pre-School

Topfield, Rear of 71 Norton Avenue, HERNE BAY, Kent, CT6 7TA

<b>Inspection date</b>	06/12/2013
Previous inspection date	26/02/2009

<b>The quality and standards of the early years provision</b>	<b>This inspection:</b>	
	Previous inspection:	
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		1
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		1
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		1

## The quality and standards of the early years provision

### This provision is outstanding

- There is an excellent outdoor environment that provides children with a wealth of opportunities to develop their learning skills.
- The staff are exceptionally well trained in the craft of forest schooling which helps enables the children to play and explore, while learning how to manage risks and be challenged and motivated to learn.
- The staff use extremely well developed planning and assessment systems to help meet the individual needs of all children.
- There is an excellent keyperson system in place which enables staff to provide very good support for all children but particularly new children starting at the pre-school and children moving on to school
- The owner and manager work together extremely well in their pursuit of excellence. They demonstrate a clear understanding of their responsibilities and have effective systems to monitor their implementation.
- The staff provide interesting and stimulating learning activities to help all children make excellent progress in all areas of their development and begin to develop their own interests and ideas.
- Staff are deployed very well and provide good supervision so that children can have access to all areas of the nursery, both inside and out, throughout the day, enabling them to become independent.
- There are very good links with the local community and the staff actively encourage the involvement of many groups such as the Brownies particularly with the Forest School.

## Information about this inspection

Inspections of registered early years provision are:

- scheduled at least once in every inspection cycle – the current cycle ends on 31 July 2016
- scheduled more frequently where Ofsted identifies a need to do so, for example where provision was previously judged inadequate
- brought forward in the inspection cycle where Ofsted has received information that suggests the provision may not be meeting the legal requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage or where assessment of the provision identifies a need for early inspection
- prioritised where we have received information that the provision is not meeting the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and which suggests children may not be safe
- scheduled at the completion of an investigation into failure to comply with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

## Inspection activities

- The inspector sampled a range of documentation including policies and assessment plans.
- The inspector observed children's play and practitioners' interactions, indoors and outdoors.
- The inspector talked to the provider about the service and how she is driving forward improvement and discussed her action plan.
- The inspector undertook a joint observation with the manager/staff member
- The inspector had discussions with parents/staff/children

**Inspector**  
Sara Garrity

## Full report

### Information about the setting

Little Acorns Pre-School is a registered charity, run by a voluntary committee. It opened in 1998 and serves the local and surrounding communities. The pre-school operates from a mobile unit on the site of Herne Junior School. It has its own enclosed large garden. The children also benefit from the use of a securely fenced woodland area which is within walking distance. The pre-school is open each weekday from 9 am to 3.30 pm term time only. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The pre-school is registered on the Early Years Register and there are currently 55 children on roll. The pre-school is in receipt of funding for the provision of free early education to children aged two, three and four years. It also supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

There are 12 staff working with the children including the manager, plus an administrative assistant and a cook. Most staff hold appropriate early years qualifications at National Vocational Qualification level 2 or above. The pre-school are qualified to deliver the forest schooling approach, have been awarded the Kent Quality Mark, and also have Pre-school Learning Alliance Accreditation.

### What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- develop further the positive images of all children and adults to include those with diverse physical characteristics.

### Inspection judgements

#### How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend

The staff promote children's learning and development exceptionally well. All children are actively engaged in exploring their environment. They are eager to join in games with friends as they discover the interesting and stimulating objects and artefacts around them. Staff are extremely skilled at interacting with children, and are expert at planning to meet their individual learning needs. Therefore, activities and resources promote learning very well across all areas of the curriculum. Children make excellent progress from their individual starting points. Observations and assessments are used exceptionally well, from identifying children's initial starting points to recording assessments for children's progress checks at the age of two. Staff engage children in conversations and extend their language development through careful questioning which challenges the children's thinking. The children have the confidence to initiate activities for themselves as well as follow clearly established day-to-day routines. All children enjoy coming together to share experiences, for example listen to stories being read and singing Christmas songs. From the time the children eagerly arrive at pre-school to the time they leave every child is

absorbed in finding out about the world through exploring and investigating. The children learn to recognise their names, as they self-register, and have excellent opportunities to practise their early writing, using pens and wipe boards inside or sticks to draw lines in the mud outside. The computer and interactive white board are very popular and the children make connections between the mouse and screen as they dress the clown. Staff involve children in a vast range of problem solving and mathematical activities. Children thoroughly enjoy filling and emptying containers with pasta; looking at mass and weight as well as fitting large puzzle pieces together. Staff extend the children's learning as they talk about adding and taking away as they match the shapes on the underside of the ducks.

Staff provide children with excellent opportunities to develop their physical skills both in and outdoors. Children have great fun rolling the balls down the guttering and predicting what will happen next or limbo under the rope to see how low they can go. They have limitless opportunities to climb and balance, developing their confidence and increasing their mobility. All children are extremely motivated to learn and enjoy being challenged as they use the stilts or practice throwing and catching balls. The excellent skills the staff have developed in forest schooling promote endless opportunities for children to use their imaginations and have a go. Children construct things on a large scale as they move large equipment around to balance planks on hills, or a tree trunk making see saw and seats. Inside, the children build tall towers and models which they proudly show to staff and friends. Staff provide the children with a rich environment, which is full of displays of letters and numbers. The children have excellent resources to support them to learn about their own and others cultures, however opportunities to learn about all members of society are not as apparent. The pre-school places a big emphasis on outside play; the children have the opportunity to regularly go on walks in the community and benefit from engaging and exploring the ever-evolving woodland area.

### **The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children**

Children flourish in a welcoming homely pre-school that is safe, and secure. All activities are purposeful and positively promote the children's independence. The children demonstrate exemplary behaviour as they share and enjoy taking turns with equipment. The children all love helping staff and friends to tidy up or find lost items. An exceptionally well-embedded key person and buddy system approach is in place to support all the children to form secure attachments. All children demonstrate a feeling of security as they seek out their key person for support and guidance, demonstrating tremendously well-established relationships.

Staff provide excellent opportunities for children to learn the importance of leading healthy life styles. Healthy eating is important at the pre-school and children enjoy a drink of milk or water and a range of healthy snacks. Meal times are a social occasion where the children come together to eat a packed lunch provided by parents, or a healthy meal cooked on site. The staff encourage the children's independence by enabling them to pour their own drinks, as well as showing them how to use their cutlery properly. The staff utilise every opportunity discussing healthy eating and where food comes from with the

children. After meals, the children are encouraged to help tidy up by scraping food waste off their plates and placing cutlery in washing up bowls.

Children have weekly opportunities to visit the woodland area; they wear high visibility vests to walk there. Staff utilise the short walk to extend the children's learning as they use maps to navigate their way. The staff talk to the children about how to cross the road safely with an adult as well as learning about the wider community. Once in the woodland area the children are reminded of how to keep themselves and others safe as well as the creatures they find in the woods. This whole experience enhances the children's awareness of the natural world. Children thoroughly enjoy the fresh air and exercise. They are able to take small risks, for example, feeding the dinosaur tree or balancing on rope bridges. All children have fantastic opportunities to learn to keep themselves healthy and safe.

Very strong links with the school on site mean that the children enter school confidently. The pre-school encourage the teachers to come to meet the children and read stories. The staff have developed good lines of communication with the school and spend time discussing friendship groups and progress with the teachers. Therefore, children are extremely well supported as they move on to school.

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

The leadership and management of the pre-school is outstanding. Safeguarding children is given the highest priority. The manager, with the support of the committee, ensures that rigorous and robust procedures are in-place for the recruitment and vetting of staff. This ensures that all staff working with children are suitable to do so. All staff are very aware of the procedures to follow to keep children safe at all times. The manager has undertaken designated person training and fully understand her responsibilities in meeting the welfare and safeguarding requirements of the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage. Comprehensive policies and procedures are in place and effectively followed by all staff. A member of staff takes responsibility for recording the children's attendance. They complete a daily register, providing a secure procedure for arrivals and departures. Staff are informed if someone different is collecting the child and a password system is in operation to fully safeguard the children. The management have also installed CCTV to monitor the in and outside areas at all times.

The manager demonstrates a very strong commitment to providing high quality childcare. She is highly reflective and is clear about her responsibilities in meeting the learning and development requirements. She has a clear vision for the pre-school and is continuously seeking ways to improve it further. All activities are evaluated for effectiveness and changes are made to further extend and capture the children's interests. She has high expectation of herself and the staff. Self evaluation is very focused and effective monitoring and evaluation ensures the pre-school continues to improve its practice. The staff work exceptionally well in partnership with a very wide range of external agencies and professionals to meet the needs of children with special educational needs. Boys and

girls are equally encouraged to follow their individual interests. Thorough monitoring procedures to track children's progress are in place, enabling staff to identify any weaknesses or particular groups of children needing additional planning. Consequently, gaps in achievement between various groups of children are narrowing significantly

Comprehensive risk assessments are in place. Staff carry out daily checks to identify any potential hazards and minimise risks. Staff are extremely well trained in risk assessments and carry extensive checks in every area the children come into contact with. They carry out thorough checks on the woodland area to maintain the safety and security of the children while off site. All required documentation is appropriately completed, and available for inspection. Fire drills are regularly practised and reviewed to ensure the quick evacuation of the building to keep children and adults safe. All visitors are required to sign in and out of the building.

Parent and grandparent involvement in the children's learning is valued and they are encouraged to share information on a daily basis. Parents are urged to add information into the children's learning journeys and read them regularly. Parents spoken to praise the way in which staff supported their child to settle into the pre-school, commenting on how the staff are always available to talk to if they need them. Parental involvement is important to the pre-school and parents are encouraged to attend stay and play sessions as well as regular coffee mornings. Parents benefit from receiving regular newsletters and parents spoken to particularly liked the website and being able to contact the staff via email. There is lots of community support extended towards the pre-school and many local groups are involved in helping to develop the forest school. The manager has secured extensive links with other agencies to establish the support needed for all children and their families. The pre-school also support other organisations as part of their role as a leading early years provider for the local authority, and proudly show off their forest school to those providers wishing to embrace the concept.

## What inspection judgements mean

### Registered early years provision

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	Outstanding provision is highly effective in meeting the needs of all children exceptionally well. This ensures that children are very well prepared for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 2	Good	Good provision is effective in delivering provision that meets the needs of all children well. This ensures children are ready for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	The provision is not giving children a good standard of early years education and/or there are minor breaches of the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be monitored and inspected within twelve months of the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	Provision that is inadequate requires significant improvement and/or enforcement action. The provision is failing to give children an acceptable standard of early years education and/or is not meeting the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be monitored and inspected again within six months of the date of this inspection.
Met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider continues to meet the requirements for registration.
Not met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider does not meet the requirements for registration.

## Inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted 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.

## Setting details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	127322
<b>Local authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	942045
<b>Type of provision</b>	Full-time provision
<b>Registration category</b>	Childcare - Non-Domestic
<b>Age range of children</b>	2 - 5
<b>Total number of places</b>	30
<b>Number of children on roll</b>	55
<b>Name of provider</b>	Little Acorns (Herne) Pre-School Committee
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	26/02/2009
<b>Telephone number</b>	01227 749317 or 742605 (admin)

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## Type of provision

For the purposes of this inspection the following definitions apply:

Full-time provision is that which operates for more than three hours. These are usually known as nurseries, nursery schools and pre-schools and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the higher fee for registration.

Sessional provision operates for more than two hours but does not exceed three hours in any one day. These are usually known as pre-schools, kindergartens or nursery schools

and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the lower fee for registration.

Childminders care for one or more children where individual children attend for a period of more than two hours in any one day. They operate from domestic premises, which are usually the childminder's own home. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Out of school provision may be sessional or full-time provision and is delivered before or after school and/or in the summer holidays. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. Where children receive their Early Years Foundation Stage in school these providers do not have to deliver the learning and development requirements in full but should complement the experiences children receive in school.

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