

Little Acorns (Colleton) Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number 148662
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Inspector Christopher Gray

Setting address Colleton CP School, Colleton Drive, Twyford, Reading,
Berkshire, RG10 0AX

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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 (Colleton) Pre-School is situated in the grounds of Colleton Primary School on the outskirts of Twyford, a small Berkshire town. The majority of the children currently attending represent the local community and come from Twyford or the surrounding villages. The pre-school was established approximately 30 years ago and is situated in a purpose built building with its own outside play area. A new, purpose built building will be ready from September 2009. The school also makes use of some of the facilities within the school, to which most of the children transfer. The present and new buildings are fully accessible for wheelchair users; the new building will have a fully accessible disabled lavatory. The pre-school operates on weekdays during school terms only and is open from 08:45 until 11:15 and 12:35 until 15:05. Children attend for a variety of sessions. A lunch club operates between 11:15 and 12:35. The pre-school is registered on the Early Years Register, the compulsory and the voluntary parts of the Childcare Register for 26 children at each session, aged two to five. There are currently 52 children on roll, of whom 47 are three and four year olds in receipt of funded nursery education. A total of nine members of staff are employed to work with the children and all have appropriate Early Years qualifications. The manager is completing a degree in Childcare. The deputy manager has qualified teacher status. The Pre-School is managed by a committee of pre-school parents and is accredited with the Pre-school Learning Alliance with an emphasis on learning through play.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Little Acorns (Colleton) is an outstanding pre-school setting that is justifiably popular with parents. Through an expertly-judged balance of child-initiated learning and activities designed by the adults, the needs of children of all abilities and backgrounds are met extremely well so that all are fully included in the setting's outstanding provision. This is because all adults make excellent use of the outstanding assessment documents, known as 'Learning Journeys', which are regularly shared with parents. Because these give a close analysis of all the steps that the children make in their learning, staff plan very effectively for children's next steps, based on their interests as well as on their stage of development. All issues from the last inspection have been fully addressed and staff are all involved in a thorough process of continuous improvement. The present accommodation is small, but this does not detract from the high quality of provision. A new building is expected to be ready by September.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the high quality early years provision the registered person should consider:

- finalising the consultations and preparations for the move to new accommodation

The leadership and management of the early years provision

Leadership and management are outstanding because they are driven by a mixture of high levels of commitment and considerable professional expertise. The pre-school has a more favourable ratio of adults to children than required, which means that children often work with an adult individually or in very small groups. This was observed when a group of three children, who had shown a previous interest in letters and sounds, played a game with two adults, based on the initial sounds of items drawn from a bag. A child who was visiting the setting with her mother in preparation for joining next term also enjoyed this game, which enabled the adults to make notes about some of her preferred learning styles. Notes made on such visits form the basis of each child's Learning Journey, so that, by the time children transfer to their Reception year, a detailed 'Transition Record' is passed to the next school, giving a thorough indication of what children have achieved.

The enthusiasm and support of parents is built on well. Some help in the setting and all are invited to be present on settling-in days. Parents use the Learning Journeys in helping their children to develop. The pre-school is managed by a committee of parents and grandparents, whose dedication is shown by their current efforts to raise funds for the new building. Plans are being finalised and work is expected to begin next term. The procedures and practices for safeguarding children are extremely thorough and effective. The impact of this can be seen in children's confidence and contentment when they arrive in the morning.

The pre-school works hard and very successfully to make constant improvements to its provision; a big factor in this is the commitment of all staff to their continuing professional development. As a result, self-evaluation is driven by new initiatives and by thorough evaluation of existing practice, including review by colleagues of the effectiveness of each other's teaching sessions. This is demonstrated by the success with which the pre-school has embraced the ideas of basing learning much more on children's own interests and choices. It is also shown by the fact that the setting has been awarded the highest grading by the Pre-school Learning Alliance.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Children's considerable enjoyment of their experience in the pre-school is immediately obvious to any visitor. This comes about as a result of the excellent provision for children's welfare. On arrival, they quickly find their name cards, hang up their coats and go straight to the group table with their key person for 'show and tell'. The few tears on leaving a parent are very well handled, so that it is soon as though they had never been. This shows how safe and happy they feel. Supervision outside is well organised and effective, so that whenever children choose to learn outside, they may do so.

After an initial session planned by the staff, children choose for themselves what they want to do. Staff then follow the children to maximise on the learning. Regular staff discussions ensure that all the necessary areas of learning are covered. A number of children were playing with toy frogs on a trampoline, which

were expected to land on numbered lily-pads. This gave rise to interesting discussions about where frogs would land, as well as good questions to develop number skills. Some of the children were so interested in the frogs that this was noted on the 'interests board' to form the basis of activities for next week's learning. These are built on in weekly planning meetings, enabling children to make outstanding steps in their achievement.

Snack and lunch-times give opportunities for children to show their understanding of what is good for them and to discuss their likes and dislikes. They appreciate the importance of hand-washing, especially after having been involved in painting spaghetti. Because they learn from the things that interest them, children have excellent attitudes to work and to each other. They share and take turns very well, vacating computers when the sand in the timer runs out. They tidy up enthusiastically, so that the pre-school has a well established sense of community to which all contribute. Staff expertise moves children on to learn skills associated with number and sounds as they are ready, so that, by the time they leave, most children have made great advances on the good skills with which they started at the pre-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

Overall effectiveness

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	1
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	1

Leadership and management

How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	1
How effective is the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement?	1
How well does the setting work in partnership with parents and others?	1
How well are children safeguarded?	1

Quality and standards

How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?	1
How well are children helped to stay safe?	1
How well are children helped to be healthy?	1
How well are children helped to enjoy and achieve?	1
How well are children helped to make a positive contribution?	1
How well are children helped develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	1

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.