

Helmdon Acorns Pre-School

Hintons Close, HELMDON, Northamptonshire, NN13 5QP

Inspection date	13/11/2014
Previous inspection date	06/07/2011

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	3
	Previous inspection:	2
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		3
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		3
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		3

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision requires improvement

- Children are provided with a warm and welcoming learning environment, where they benefit from plenty of fresh air and physical exercise. This provides motivation for their learning and development.
- Good levels of support for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities means they make steady progress from their starting points.
- Children's welfare is effectively safeguarded by staff who have a clear knowledge and understanding of how to protect the children in their care.
- Staff are proactive at engaging parents in their children's learning. They regularly share information about children's progress, and suggest ideas of how learning can be further enhanced at home.

It is not yet good because

- Planning of group activities does not take full account of the needs of all the children taking part. Consequently, some children lose focus and are disinterested.
- Children's behaviour is not always managed consistently by all staff. This does not fully support their learning and development.
- The effectiveness of the quality of teaching is not monitored closely enough. As a result, all children's learning is not fully supported, to ensure that they make the best possible progress at all times.

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 held a meeting with the manager and chairperson of the committee and spoke at appropriate times to staff and children throughout the inspection.
- The inspector conducted a joint observation with the manager.
- The inspector observed children's activities in the indoor and the outside learning environment.
- The inspector looked at children's assessment records and planning documentation, and a range of other records, policies and procedures.
- The inspector checked evidence of the suitability and qualifications of staff working with children, and the provider's self-evaluation and action plans.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents spoken to on the day of the inspection.

Inspector

Linda Newcombe

Full report

Information about the setting

Helmdon Acorns Pre-school opened at the current premises in 2011. It is a committee run group and operates from purpose built premises within Helmdon, Northamptonshire. The premises have disabled access and toilet facilities and are located on one level. There is an enclosed outside area available for play. The pre-school is open from 9am to 3.30pm each weekday during term times. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The pre-school is registered on the Early Years Register. There are currently 39 children on roll, all of whom are in the early years age range. The pre-school supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language. There are eight members of staff, seven of whom hold early years qualifications at level 3 or above. The pre-school provides funded early education for three- and four-year-old children, and it has links with the local school.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

To meet the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage the provider must:

- ensure a consistent approach to behaviour management is implemented by all staff and effectively monitored by leaders and managers
- ensure that the effectiveness of larger group activities is improved, to enable all children to be supported to remain focused and engrossed in their learning.

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

- evaluate the effectiveness of procedures to monitor the quality of teaching, to ensure that all children are provided with high quality learning experiences, to support them to make the best possible progress in their learning and development.

Inspection judgements

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

Staff have an appropriate knowledge and understanding of how children learn, and most activities are planned around children's interests. As a result, children generally make steady progress in their learning and are supported by staff who know them well. When children start, staff gather information from parents about children's interests and about what they can already do. This information is combined with initial observations of the children and used to identify their starting points. Ongoing observations of children are used to inform assessments of their learning. For example, children's individual next steps in learning are identified; these are shared with parents in order to support their continued

learning at home. In addition, all children have individual learning journals, which are accessible to parents. Each folder contains photographs of the children engaged in activities, examples of their creative work, observations and assessments. Consequently, parents are kept well informed and involved in their child's learning.

Staff generally support children and ask appropriate questions during activities to challenge their thinking, which extends their learning. For example, with the support of an adult, children find different ways to transport leaves from one area of the outside environment to another. This extends children's critical thinking skills and develops their ability to solve their own problems, by adapting different tools to complete their task. As a result, children are accruing the necessary skills to be successful in their further learning. However, whole group activities are not well planned and often go on for too long. Staff do not take into account the individual needs of all the children taking part, and in particular the needs of younger children. Consequently, some children lose focus and become disinterested. Children are beginning to make connections as they use their imagination to play games and initiate their own play agendas. For example, children use their imagination as they role play, being hairdressers, practising their skills at brushing dolls hair. Staff make sure that they spend time listening to children, so that children feel valued. Children's early literacy skills are promoted. Staff encourage children to recognise their name on cards when they enter pre-school and at snack time. Children are encouraged to develop their mark-making skills, through painting and other media. They manage control of different tools well, holding crayons and paintbrushes to draw and colour their pictures. Children's interest in books is fostered, as staff sit and read with them. The outdoor environment offers children's a wide range of learning experiences. For example, children play in a mud kitchen and have fun negotiating their way down the hill on ride-on toys. This provides opportunities for them to experiment and enhances their imaginative play.

The pre-school places a strong emphasis on promoting inclusion for all children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language. Staff liaise with parents to obtain familiar words from children's home language. This encourages parents and children to feel involved and value. Where there are concerns about a child's progress, staff work closely with parents and relevant agencies to successfully identify and support any gaps in their learning. As a result, some children receive one-to-one support. As they enjoy a range of adult-led activities that concentrate on promoting effective language and communication skills. Staff track children's progress and regularly share this with parents. Through consultations with their child's key person and written summaries each term. Parents contribute to this process and state that they value these discussions.

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

Well-established and effective relationships with parents enable staff to develop warm and secure attachments with their key children. Staff support children during the settling-in process and work with parents to ensure that children are comfortable and settle quickly. As a result, children's emotional well-being is generally supported well, and they are confident to explore their new environment independently. Children and their families are

welcomed into the pre-school, and are supported to make new friends. Resources are arranged to enable children to make choices about their play and develop their own ideas.

Most children help to tidy up when promoted by staff. However, some children display unwanted behaviour. They throw toys on the floor and walk over other children's activities. Staff do not always see or challenge this suitably. Consequently, children gain little understanding of the impact of their behaviour, and do not learn strategies for dealing with their emotions. As a result, they become frustrated and upset and other children are left unsettled and this has a negative impact on their readiness to learn. Staff help children to develop a healthy lifestyle. Children sit and enjoy eating the apples and pears at snack time. Staff provide guidance to parents so that children's lunch boxes have healthy options for them to choose from, and staff encourage children to eat the savoury foods first. This helps children to develop an understanding of healthy eating and promotes healthy choices. Staff encourage good hygiene routines with the children, ensuring they wash their hands at appropriate times, for example, before eating and after using the toilet. As a result, children learn that washing their hands makes the germs go away, which helps to keep them healthy. Children have daily opportunities to play outside and take part in physical exercise using a varied range of equipment. Consequently, children have plenty of fresh air and physical activity.

Staff promote children's growing independence well. Children are confident to give the plates and cups out at snack time. Children develop new friendships and learn to take turns and are beginning to appreciate the needs of others. This demonstrates that children are developing a sense of responsibility and the skills needed in preparation for their move to school. Staff support children's safety through effective use of risk assessment and adequate levels of supervision. Children are kept safe and secure because staff have a good understanding of safeguarding children. They help children to learn about keeping themselves safe during play. For example, staff remind children to be careful around the steps in the outside area, and support them to use the large equipment safely. When accidents do happen, staff are sensitive to the children's needs as they deal with the incident, and record all necessary details so that parents are fully informed.

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

The manager and committee work hard to ensure they establish good relationships with parents and children. They have sufficient understanding of their role and responsibility in meeting the learning and development requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. All staff have completed suitability checks, and the manager ensures their ongoing suitability by carrying out further regular checks. Staff demonstrate a good knowledge of the safeguarding procedures and they clearly understand the procedures for reporting any concerns. There is clear guidance for staff to follow in the safeguarding policy and staff have a thorough understanding of the signs and symptoms that may indicate a child is being abused. This helps to protect children from harm and keep them safe. Risk assessments ensure that any identified hazards are removed or minimised, and the main door is always kept locked. This ensures that children are unable to leave unsupervised and that persons cannot enter the premises without the knowledge of staff. As a result,

children are protected from harm and are able to play safely. Most staff have completed paediatric first-aid training, which ensures that they can deal with any medical emergencies if they arise.

Staff are suitably qualified to work with children and they regularly attend further training to update their knowledge. The manager monitors the educational programmes and the quality of teaching. This takes place through a weekly meeting between the manager and staff, and annual appraisals support this process. However, this process needs improving to ensure that the quality of teaching is consistent across all staff and in all activities. In particular the planning of whole group activities, to ensure that learning experiences are suited to younger children's needs.

Partnerships with parents are good. Parents are aware of who their child's key person is, as this information is displayed for them to view. A range of written policies and procedures are in place; these are shared with parents and implemented effectively to support the safeguarding and welfare of children. In addition, the pre-school has a website and social media site, through which they keep parents informed of any events. Staff encourage parents input, and seek parents' views through questionnaires and verbal daily feedback. Parents spoken to on the day of inspection, state that they are very happy with the care and learning for their children. Their comments include, 'Staff have been very supportive and work with parents to ensure children make progress'. The staff show a clear understanding of the importance of working in partnerships with other settings. For example, they have established close links with their local school. This helps to ensure that there is consistency in children's care and learning so that the move to school goes smoothly. Relationships with other professionals, such as speech and language therapists, are established so that children's specific needs are supported, and they are helped them to make the best possible progress.

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. We re-inspect nurseries and pre-schools judged as requires improvement within 12 months of the date of 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		There were no children present at the time of the inspection. The inspection judgement is that the provider continues to meet the requirements for registration.
Not met		There were no children present at the time of the inspection. 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

Unique reference number	EY420501
Local authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	852109
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 5
Total number of places	26
Number of children on roll	39
Name of provider	Helmdon Pre-School Committee
Date of previous inspection	06/07/2011
Telephone number	01295768327

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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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