

How Little Acorns Pre-School supports children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

What our setting provides

Little Acorns Pre-School and Oaks Afterschool Club was originally registered in 1998 and changed its registration status in 2010 to management by a voluntary committee with charity status. It operates from a modular unit with its own enclosed outdoor play area, set in the grounds of Kennington Primary School, which is situated in Fulwood, Preston.

Our building consists of two rooms and we are able to take a maximum of 36 children from the age of two to four. It is open term time only providing sessional day care Monday to Friday in three different sessions: 8:30am-11:30am, 12:00-3:00pm and 8:30am-5:30pm.

We resource the setting to suit the needs of all of the children and differentiate resources and activities to support all ages and stages of development. We provide extending care for a maximum of 32 children.

The manager along with the deputy manager is responsible for monitoring the quality of provision on offer within the Pre-School. The deputy also supports the manager in the overall running of the setting. The Pre-School manager is answerable to a voluntary management committee.

The setting supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language. The setting currently employs eight staff to work with the children, all of whom hold early year's qualifications. Two members of staff have a full early year's degree and one of them holds an Early Years Professional Status. Another staff member holds an Early Year's foundation degree. The setting receives support from the local authority and has gained the Lancashire Quality Assurance accreditation along with the Smile for life award.

Within the setting there are key staff who have additional responsibilities:

- Alison Shepherd: Manager and Education Care and Looked After children
- Stephanie Jenkinson: Special Educational Needs Co-Ordinator
- Amanda O'Rourke/ Donna Carter Behaviour Co-Ordinator
- Jennifer Carr: Parent Involvement Co-Ordinator
- Jasvinder Singh: Equality Named Co-Ordinator

Accessibility and inclusion

Access is through a single gate next to Kennington Primary School drive. There is a slight ramp up to the main door. There is no immediate parking, however, there is parking in the surrounding streets. The building and outdoor area is accessible for wheelchairs and other mobility aids. We have a small entrance area and everything is on one level once inside the building. The main gate to the grounds is key coded and the entrance door to the setting has a mortise lock.

The setting has a disabled toilet which is easily accessible and there is a changing room within the children's toilets with facilities for disposing of nappies. Space is limited due to us being a modular building; however, we would source additional storage to support parents/children's needs.

Within the setting all of the provisions are accessible and we are willing to re-organise to meet the needs of the children. The setting has small height adjustable tables and all of the resources are labelled with pictures and are easily accessible for children.

To support our parents verbally and families whose first language is not English we try various ways of communicating such as hand signals or gestures. We also write information down if needed and bi-lingual staff are always on hand to support parents understanding and to help fill in forms. To support children's understanding and develop inclusion, staff use picture key rings alongside facial and hand gestures.

Other relevant information such as policies and procedure, Ofsted reports and important contact details are accessible once a child has started at Little Acorns.

The rooms

The setting is divided into two rooms Explores (2-3yrs) Inventors (3-4yrs). There are venetian blinds on all the windows and the walls are of natural colour. The floors are vinyl and carpet and rugs are used in some areas of the room to make comfortable areas for play and relaxation. The children's toys/resources and storage units are all at child height. Photographs and labels are displayed on the front of all of the boxes so that it is clear what is in them.

The outdoors

The outdoor area is accessible down two small steps or through a gate straight onto the play area. There is a large open space carpeted in the middle with a soft safety floor running around the edges. The area is mainly flat and even and is accessible for children using wheelchairs or mobility aids.

We have an outdoor classroom which is large and wooden and up a small step, this is used for snack and lunch times. We have a small exploration garden which has sensory plants and a bug area. The climbing equipment is made of wood and we have a large balancing beam and a balancing rope. We have a range of outdoor resources which are accessible on a daily basis and are chosen and adapted to suit the needs of the children. Outdoors is currently shared between the two rooms.

Identification and early intervention

When a child starts at the setting, we have an induction day and, on this day, we take time to talk to parents and provide them with information on how learning is planned. Parents are also able to view some children's files whose journey has already started at the setting. Within the setting all of the staff have responsibility for the learning and development of their individual children. The keyperson is responsible for developing a good relationship with parents and children, keeping parents informed of children's progress, supporting home links, carrying out play experiences for children and completing each child's Learning Journey.

Once a child starts at the setting the keyworker will carry out a number of observations for the child, these along with the parent's information will provide a starting point and a unique pathway for the child's development. This will also help us to identify any child who may need early intervention.

Children are assessed against the Birth to Five Matters using a best fit approach to support each child's individual development. This approach to assessing children enables us to identify what we provide for all children. For children who require a little bit of extra input in a specific area we follow the wave two approach. Children who require more specialised or intensive intervention we follow the wave three approach.

We engage parents in their child's learning through the use of Tapestry (an online system) this system enables parents to get an overview of the child's week and also enables parents to take part in their child's learning through activities. Parents are also able to upload photos of their child's learning experiences/adventures at home with a comment, which can also be used to inform planning for a child. We also send home a paper copy of what their keyworker is focusing on and ask parents to continue the child's learning at home and then parents are asked to write a comment of their achievements.

For some children, the next steps may involve the keyworker targeting a specific area of development. Keyworkers would plan additional opportunities for the child to have experiences, designed to support the identified area. This enhancement and targeting links to the wave two. When planning work for children with special educational needs we give due regard to information and targets contained in the child's Individual Education Plan (IEP). All staff aim to establish good working relationships with all children, treating them with kindness and respect and following our Behaviour Policy, using positive behaviour strategies.

Practitioners and practice

The setting works within the framework of the Birth to five Matters. Practitioners use this guidance which enables us to provide a robust curriculum for the children, it identifies three prime areas of learning and development and four specific areas of learning and development.

Up to the age of 3 years children will cover the 3 prime areas which will embed Communication and Language, Social and emotional and physical development. At the age of 3 children will follow the three prime areas to embed them however, they will be introduced to specific areas Maths, Literacy, Understanding the World, Expressive arts and design ensuring strong foundations in development and learning.

Activities and resources are adapted to suit the needs of all children in each age range. Practitioners, differentiate the activities that they develop and the provision that is on offer meets the needs of the children in their group. For some children, a greater level of differentiation is required, because they have additional or special educational needs. Practitioners, are sensitive to the development needs of the children in their care

Our learning environment is created with stimulating resources and displays to interest and engage children. We encourage children to access resources independently and to help to tidy away at the end of the session through a tidy up song

The setting holds termly phone consultations to inform parents of how their child is progressing. We also supply parents with a home from home booklet that keyworkers and parents communicate with on a weekly or daily basis. Parents are also able to speak to keyworkers on a daily basis when their child enters or leaves the setting. There are also leaflets available that identify local groups and resources available to parents of young children in the area.

Parents are always made welcome and encouraged to take part in activities at Pre-School. We also ask parents if they would like to share something that they enjoy doing such as baking or gardening. Parents are involved through using the home books and are encouraged to bring in pictures of the child's family. We hold coffee days and fundraising events and the setting has had parents doing Mendi patterns on the children to learn about diversity and other cultures.

Children are encouraged to express their views about their own learning through their keyworker floor books. During circle time children are supported to talk about their home life, things they like doing and their interests at the setting.

Provision and resources

Children are provided with resources that are developmentally appropriate for their range of development. We ensure that there are resources available that overlap with the age ranges, so that children who are developing at a different pace can access resources appropriate to their stage of learning and development. We are starting to use our provision mapping to help us to identify some of the resources and activities available to support children's needs

All practitioners are encouraged to work with external professionals who visit children in the setting, some will have more experience of this than others but they are supported by the SENCO. For some children it may be the case that at specific times of the day they require additional support. As a setting we attempt to make reasonable adjustments to provide this. We look to provide additional support flexibly using additional staff if this is appropriate. Children's achievements are celebrated during the session through receiving a certificate and putting it in a box for the staff to read it out at the end of the session. We incorporate British values into this as children are rewarded for sharing, caring and being kind. Parents are also encouraged to share Children's achievements at home through Tapestry and their sharing book.

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Reviews

The setting uses phone consultations each half term to inform parents how their child is progressing and their next steps in learning. We try and offer stay and play sessions which enables parents/families to build a relationship with keyworkers and other staff. Home link books are used to inform parents of learning that is taking place in the setting and parents are able to use this as a communication tool if they are unable to come into the setting. Parents are able to review us on our website and on Day nurseries website.

PARENTS COMMENTS

We want to say a sincere thank you for your dedication and kindness towards the children. Having no family around, we were worried about the effects of isolation on our child. But you provided her with a safe, warm place to go, somewhere she has looked forward to going every week and it was a great comfort to us. (E.H, 2021).

Thank you for everything you have done this year our child loves his time at nursery and the progress he has made is amazing. (K.T, 2021).

Thank you for all the care and support you have given me. I have loved being part of your nursery and will miss you all so much (J.M,2021).

Transition

When a child is given a place, we ask parents to visit the setting with the child on an induction day as this gives them a chance to look around and complete the necessary paperwork. Parents are then asked to bring their child over a period of time to enable the child to settle and this can take several weeks.

Children can bring a comforter if this is required to settle them. On starting at the setting parents are asked to complete an 'All about me' booklet and children are given an initial keyworker who will work closely with the family and the child to help them settle. However, the keyworker could change if the child forms a close bond with another member of staff. When a child is transferring to a new setting or the next stage of education it is important that we support their transition. To do this we ask teachers to visit the setting to meet the child. We set up a school room in the Pre-School and ask parents to bring in the child's new school jumpers and book bags and we talk about it at chat time with their friends. If children are transferring to the local school, we arrange story time once a week to get them used to a classroom environment and the teacher. As soon as a child receives their acceptance letter for their new school, any SEN requirements will be brought to the attention of the teacher and a formal report is sent highlighting the strengths and needs of each child, alongside any action plans the child may have in place. We would ask the setting if they could or if we could make a transition booklet (social story) to support the child's settling in and we would set up extra visits along with meetings