



Little Acorns Pre-school & Nursery

Little Acorns Team



Emily O'Hara
Nursery Manager

NVQ Level 3 Children and Young People's Workforce

Emily joined Little Acorns in January 2018 and brings to the role over eight years' experience of working with ages 0-5 years in both day care and home-based environments. Emily believes in child-led play and learning, and through trial and error; 'play is the highest form of research'. Emily advocates children's voice and the freedom to create.



From left to right;

Kate Gearing, Nursery Assistant – Alison Walker, Nursery Assistant – Emily O'Hara, Nursery Manager – Jamie Gearing – Lead Practitioner - Jo Middleton, Deputy Manager –Kirsty Farley, Nursery Assistant

Management Team



Antonia Ogden-Meade
Company Executive



Kathryn Belmore
Area Director North



Grace Fairbourn
Area Director South



Lauren Reddin
Office Assistant



Alison Austin
Accounts Manager



Parent Testimonials



2018

"We have been so pleased with everything at Little Acorns. Emily is a fantastic manager and all staff are friendly, helpful and great with my children."- Katy Ereira

"I have been impressed with the quality of care and engagement by the team to ensure the children are interested, happy and keen to learn. Natalia has definitely benefited from attending the pre-school!"- Paulina

"Ben's development has come on so much since joining Little Acorns. It's not only us that has noticed but also friends and family. He has lots of fun that he doesn't realise he is learning. The communication is great, and nothing ever seems to be a problem- thank you."- Lisa Abel



"Amy has thoroughly loved her time at LA and I wouldn't hesitate to recommend Emily and the team to any friends or family. We will miss you all but we know Amy is truly prepared for school due to the love and care from you all. Thank you so much."- Elaine Blackmore



"Lydia has thoroughly enjoyed her time at LA and looked forward to every session she had. The staff have been amazing and taken good care of her. Emily and Jo have done a great job managing a lovely pre-school. Thank you."- Natalie Osmond

"Ellie started in January 2018 after moving into the area. Little Acorns made the transition as easy as possible for Ellie, and in no time, she was settled, she loves nursery and has come on leaps and bounds! Myself and Ellie's dad are so happy with all the staff at Little Acorns. Thank you!"- Toni



Our Nurseries & Pre-Schools

We are very proud to be a part of a collection of six nurseries, focusing and sharing best practice that enhances child outcomes.

A Step Ahead Children's Nursery 54 place nursery open all year round and set in a rural location. The nursery is very popular with working parents and many of the children attend from 8am until 6pm each day. It was the first nursery in the company but has been operating for over 25 years. The nursery was awarded Outstanding for a second time in 2014 and is popular with local families as well as those commuting up and down the M23.

A Step Ahead Children's Nursery,
Leechpond Hill
Lower Beeding
West Sussex
RH13 6NR
Telephone number: 01403 891012.
Email: astepahead@btconnect.com
Manager: Ellen Cole



Little Acorns Pre-School operates from a classroom in Southwater Infant Academy. It is a term time only pre-school with up to 24 children aged 2 years 9 months to 4 years old. Little Acorns is very popular and runs to high occupancy throughout the year with a significant waiting list! The nursery had its last Ofsted inspection in January 2018 where they achieved Outstanding in Personal development, behaviour and welfare with an overall grade of Good. Southwater has a very vibrant community spirit and the nursery is very well supported by the parents, carers and grandparents who have used it across the years.

Little Acorns Pre-school Nursery
Southwater Infant Academy
Worthing Road
Southwater
West Sussex
RH13 9JH
Telephone: 07584125962
Email: littleacornssouthwater@btinternet.com
Manager: Emily O'Hara



Ashington Children's Nursery opened in 2012. Operating from a converted church on the main road through the village, this is now a 63-place nursery for children from 3 months to 8 years of age. It offers a holiday club outside term time for school aged children and has a mix of children who attend all day, and others who come for shorter grant funded sessions. Ashington's inspection in 2016 rated the nursery as Good with the inspector commending the strength of leadership in each classroom as one of the many reasons children's make such good progress there!

Ashington Children's Nursery
London Road
Ashington
West Sussex
RH20 3JR
Telephone number: 01903 892643
Email: ashingtonnursery@btinternet.com
Manager: Abbey Elliott



A Step Ahead at Lancing joined the company in 2014. It provides care for up to 63 children aged 3 months to 4 years all year round. Situated in the heart of Lancing and neighbouring the Children and Family Centre, the nursery is very accessible to local families and is also able to provide child care for commuters using the rail network as Lancing station is very close by. At Lancing's last Ofsted inspection, they were awarded a Good rating in 2017. Parents always comment on the fabulous large garden!

A Step Ahead at Lancing

42 North Road, Lancing
West Sussex
BN15 9AB
Telephone number: 01903 756703
Email: astepaheadlancing@btinternet.com
Manager: Abbie Jenkins



A Step Ahead at Shoreham also joined the company in 2014. The nursery is next door to the Children and Family Centre at Kingston Buci which has a highly regarded play area for children and café for parents. The nursery provides care for children from 3 months to 8 years old across the year and in the holiday club and can take up to 58 children at any one time boasting large classroom and a well-resourced garden wrapped around the building. At its last inspection in 2016, it was awarded an overall Good by Ofsted with Personal development, behaviour and welfare being rated as Outstanding.

A Step Ahead at Shoreham

Middle Road
Shoreham-By-Sea
West Sussex
BN43 9GA
Telephone number: 01273467250
Email: astepaheadshoreham@btinternet.com
Managers: Laura Griffiths



Rocking Horse Pre-School & Nursery is our latest acquisition and currently operates as a 50-child place pre-school/nursery registered in 2015. It's last Ofsted Inspection achieved good in all areas. The nursery is set in a beautiful old school which has operated as a school or nursery for decades and even has a working bell tower! The two gardens and mezzanine gallery are just two of the features which parents love when they visit.

Rocking Horse Pre-School & Nursery

7 London Road
Waterlooville
Hants
PO7 5LQ
Telephone number: 02392250890
Email: rockinghorsemanager@btinternet.com
Manager: Helen O'Hara



Company Mission Statement & Our Philosophy

To champion excellence in child care by focusing on each child as an individual – encouraging and supporting their development and learning in a fun, safe, stimulating and value driven environment.

Our nurseries are designed to serve the needs of the child in a home from home environment. We recognise that parents/ carers are valued customers and their child (consumer) must receive high-quality care. The philosophy is built around identifying strengths in every child and developing those preferences at whatever level is right for the child. At the same time, the child will be encouraged to undertake activities which will develop skills that they are less confident in but will give them a sense that they are 'all-rounders' – able to do and enjoy anything and everything. We recognise the huge and significant developmental journey a child undertakes through this very important part of their life, and we wish for each child to feel loved, safe and valued for who they are and who they aspire to be. To this aim, every child is known by their key person at a level where there is a special connection – where communication will be verbal and non-verbal and where we will strive to constantly anticipate the child's development and learning needs, and where we will continue to recognise and value the impact of positive input at this early stage of their life.

Aims and Objectives

- To provide a safe, happy environment in accordance with the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage
- For children to achieve their full potential through activities and experiences that are inclusive and provide meaning for their development.
- For each child to develop a strong sense of who they are and to give opportunities to encourage individuality and to have the confidence to play and learn in areas of strength and challenge.
- To encourage parental/carer involvement by keeping them informed of their child's progress in both individual and group planned activities.
- To involve parents and carers in the development of strategy through a Partnership Forum.
- To enhance the children's confidence and self-esteem by praise and encouragement – valuing all contributions from every child.
- To plan and provide a wide range of equipment and activities with appropriate adult interaction where the children can succeed.
- To follow child led play but to link this with a semi-structured term plan creating a progression in the children's learning abilities, linking their skills and understanding.
- To provide a well-balanced curriculum, which will encourage the children to use their ideas and imagination to further their understanding of the world.
- To encourage the staff to update and further their training to ensure quality care for the children.
- To provide childcare where children and parents/carers are treated and respected equally regardless of gender, race, disability, age, faith, beliefs and sexual orientation.

Principles

Children

- To be kept safe and to come first at all times, with health and wellbeing supported at all times
- To be shown respect and their views heard and to be given choices whenever possible
- To feel valued and important
- To have fun within sensible boundaries in an inside and outside environment
- To be given the environment to learn naturally and at their own pace
- To learn important life skills: independence, respect for themselves and the respect of others
- To be given positive encouragement and foster their self-esteem

Parents

- To know that their children are kept safe at all times
- To know that we care about their children
- To know that they are the most important person in their child's life
- To feel they can talk to Nursery staff about anything
- To feel able to contribute to the Nursery's strategic direction

Employees

- To be accommodating with parent's requirements where possible and where not possible to have an open discussion with parents with clear rationale
- To feel valued and happy
- To excel in all that they do, and to be supported with training and development opportunities so that they can reach their potential
- To be flexible with their colleagues and to be professional at all times
- To feel that they can discuss any issues/concerns with senior management

Settling in Policy

In order to flourish at nursery, children need to feel safe, secure, loved and happy. The settling in process is very important in helping them to feel this way. The aim of our settling in procedure is not to get children used to being at nursery – usually they love having the space and the variety of toys to play with – but to get them used to their parents/carers leaving them. Therefore, they may need several sessions of you leaving and coming back, so that they become confident that you will **always** come back for them. Even if your child has been to nursery before, they may still struggle being left in a different environment.

At A Step Ahead Ltd we have a flexible approach to settling in sessions and are guided by the Child, Parent and Key Person.

Before we start your child's settle sessions, you will be invited into the setting to meet with your child's key person. This is a great opportunity for you to ask any questions or raise anything you are concerned about. It is also an opportunity for your child's key person to get to know you and your child. They will ask you a few questions to build up a little background knowledge and understand how best they can support your child.

At the end of this induction meeting, you child's key person will arrange settling in sessions;

Session 1: an hour session – we ask that the parents/carers stay for the duration of this session. We encourage parents to join in and play with their child.

Session 2: an hour session – we ask that parents stay for half an hour and play. At the end of the half an hour we recommend that parents sit in the office/staff area for the second half of the session. If your child cries or becomes distressed, a member of the team will come and get you. This will help your child understand that you will **always** come back for them.

Session 3: an hour session – we ask that parents stay for the first 15 minutes. We hope by this session that your child has begun to feel more confident in the setting and will be happy to go off and play. Parents can either wait at nursery for the rest of the session or go away and come back. If your child isn't ready to be left for this length of time, you can lengthen your time with your child.

Session 4: a two-hour session – the aim in this session is for parents to drop off, say goodbye and leave. Staff will call you and ask you to return if your child becomes distressed.

Session 5: a whole morning or afternoon session.

As mentioned, before we are flexible and this process can be shortened or lengthened dependant on your child's needs.

We hold a 'Settling-in Review' six weeks after the child initially starts to discuss with the parent/carer how their child has settled in and how they are making progress, and how they can support their child at home.

Transitional Objects: Lots of children have special comforts and these special comforts are called transitional objects, because they help children make the emotional transition from dependence to independence. They work, in part, because they feel good: They're soft, cuddly, and nice to touch. They're also effective because of their familiarity. This object has your child's scent on it, and it reminds them of the comfort and security of their own room/home. It makes them feel that everything is going to be okay. We encourage parents to bring transitional objects when starting at nursery as they can aid in comforting your child should they become upset.

Role of the Key Person

The role of the Key Person is to provide a safe and secure environment where children can learn and develop through play.

The Nursery Team as a whole will work with the Key Person to enhance and support the delivery of the above. The Key Person will, with the support of their Manager, be a Parents point of contact.

When allocating a Key Person, the child's attendance pattern will be taken into consideration to ensure both a consistent and confident environment where secure bonds can be developed and enable the child flourish.

From starting at the Nursery through to leaving for School, the Key Person will observe, track and develop their Key Group, communicating progress to parents through daily handover's, Parent Zone and Parent meetings.