



Supporting Statement

Additional Capacity at Little Acorns Nursery

15 July 2026

To whom it may concern,

Little Acorns Nursery is an established early years setting serving families in Aldbourne and the surrounding area. It is a popular and valued local setting, with many families living within the village able to walk to and from the nursery.

We are seeking to add additional space to the setting because the nursery continues to experience demand from local families, while the size and configuration of the existing premises limit both the number of children we can accommodate and the flexibility with which we can organise our provision.

The additional space would allow us to respond to this demand in a measured and responsible way while, importantly, improving the experience offered to children attending the nursery. The additional space would enable us to create more clearly defined and dedicated classrooms for individual age groups with each area designed specifically around the needs of the children using it. The proposal would also allow the nursery to increase its registered capacity. This would enable more local families to access early education and childcare within their own community, rather than having to travel to settings further away.

The proposal is also important to the long-term sustainability of Little Acorns. Little Acorns is a small nursery but is subject to exceptionally high business rates for a setting of its size. We challenged this assessment with the Valuation Office Agency and provided evidence from comparable nursery settings. However, following its review, the Valuation Office Agency declined to reduce the rateable value. This is particularly challenging when combined with the other significant fixed costs involved in providing properly regulated early years care, including qualified staffing, safeguarding, compliance, staff training, utilities, administration and management oversight. These costs disproportionately impact smaller settings and restrict the amount that can be reinvested in children's environments, resources and staff development. This is another

important reason for seeking additional space, as it would allow the nursery to operate at a more sustainable scale.

A more sustainable operating model would help protect the long-term future of Little Acorns and support continued investment in:

- The staff team including qualified and experienced practitioners
- Staff training and professional development
- Educational equipment and resources
- Additional support for children with special educational needs or disabilities
- The indoor and outdoor learning environment
- The quality, flexibility and range of services available to local families

For these reasons, we believe the additional space is essential to improving the experience of children, meeting the needs of local families and securing the long-term sustainability of Little Acorns Nursery as a valued part of the Aldbourne community.

Leo Palmer

Director

Little Acorns Nursery