



Acorn Cottage

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY330799
Inspection date	09 August 2006
Inspector	Joanne Lindsey Caswell
Setting Address	Acorn Nursery, Antlands Lane, Shipley Bridge, HORLEY, Surrey, RH6 9TE
Telephone number	01293772561
E-mail	
Registered person	Childcare and Learning (Pebbles) Ltd
Type of inspection	Childcare
Type of care	Full day care

ABOUT THIS INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality of childcare and, if applicable, of nursery education. The inspection was carried out under Part XA Children Act 1989 as introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000 and, where nursery education is provided, under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004; the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding; and, where nursery education is provided, the *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration or 1 April 2004 whichever is the later.

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

For more information about early years inspections, please see the booklet *Are you ready for your inspection?* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Acorn Cottage has been registered under its current ownership since 2006. The nursery is part of the Childcare and Learning Limited group, who also own a number of nurseries within Surrey and West Sussex. The nursery operates from a purpose-designed, detached house on the outskirts of Horley, Surrey. The nursery is registered for a total of 42 babies aged up to two years. Younger babies are cared for on the first floor and older, mobile babies are cared for on the ground floor. There are designated sleep areas and a fully enclosed garden available for outside play. The nursery is open, from Monday to Friday, throughout the year, from 07:30 to 18:00.

There are currently 70 babies, aged from five months to two years, on roll. The nursery supports babies with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and babies who have English as an additional language.

A team of 14 staff work with the babies. Of these, seven hold recognised early years qualifications and three staff are currently working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

All nursery rooms are well-ventilated with plenty of natural light and fresh air, creating a healthy and hygienic environment. The nappy change areas are clean and well-maintained and there is provision for hygienic nappy change procedures. For example, staff wear gloves and aprons and ensure the changing mat is cleaned thoroughly after each nappy change. This helps to guard against cross-infection. Staff encourage babies to develop good personal care routines. For example, before snack time and meal times, staff use baby wipes to clean babies' hands before eating. This encourages the older babies to learn about the importance of ensuring clean hands before eating.

There are effective systems in place to ensure that all bedding and cloth toys are laundered regularly and all areas of the nursery are thoroughly cleaned. This ensures that the nursery is clean and offers a healthy environment. All feeding equipment, teething toys and babies' toys are sterilised regularly. This guards against infection and contributes towards the babies' good health.

Babies' health and welfare needs are mostly met well. Staff are vigilant in addressing all babies' individual needs and ensure that all relevant information is exchanged with parents. The daily routine is planned very well to enable all babies to have sufficient rest periods, according to their needs. Babies follow their own sleeping patterns. This ensures that babies receive plenty of rest and sleep to promote their healthy development. However, the current arrangements for the babies who sleep outside, throughout the year, do not sufficiently ensure the babies' good health. Parents have not given clear written agreement to allow their babies to sleep outside in colder weather. The condition and size of some of the prams does not sufficiently promote the healthy development of the older babies.

All babies receive plenty of fresh air and regularly play outside in the nursery garden. This contributes towards babies' good health.

Babies have very good opportunities to develop their physical skills. The younger babies develop skills in rolling, reaching out, sitting up and crawling as they play with resources that encourage them to move and develop their mobility and dexterity. For example, younger babies happily play on activity mats and reach out for toys. They develop their hand/eye co-ordination as they hold toys in their hands and competently play with resources which encourage them to press buttons, lift lids and stack items, such as bricks and cups. This improves babies' dexterity and

encourages their manipulative skills. Older babies progress to standing up and use resources, such as walker toys, enabling them to develop their balance and learn to walk and move around unsupported. Mobile babies enjoy playing with wheeled toys in the nursery garden and use the small slide. This enables babies to improve their co-ordination and climbing skills.

Staff are vigilant in addressing babies' dietary needs. Babies follow their individual feeding patterns and there are effective systems in place for the safe storage of feeds. Staff and parents work in partnership to identify babies' weaning needs. There is a comprehensive weaning programme in place and all meals and snacks offer babies a healthy and well-balanced diet.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The premises offer a very cosy, homely and welcoming environment for babies. All areas of the premises are safe and good attention is given to ensuring babies' security. Access to the premises is closely monitored and staff only admit authorised adults. This protects all babies and ensures that only known adults are allowed on the premises. The nursery rooms are bright and airy and the space is utilised well to meet the needs of both the non-mobile and mobile babies. The first floor rooms have been purposefully designed to provide a cosy and safe environment for the youngest babies. The 'free-flow' organisation of the ground floor rooms, enables the mobile babies to move around safely. Staff take appropriate precautions to protect babies from hazards. For example, the kitchen and stairs are made inaccessible and all electrical sockets are protected. Sleeping babies are closely monitored. Staff are competent in carrying out emergency evacuation drills, ensuring that they implement relevant procedures to ensure babies' safety.

Babies have access to a good selection of toys and play materials, all of which are checked regularly to ensure they are safe and offer appropriate developmental challenge. All resources are stored at low level, enabling babies to access them safely. Most equipment and furniture is in good condition.

Staff have a good understanding of child protection issues and most staff have completed appropriate training. This enables them to implement appropriate procedures to safeguard all babies in their care.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Babies thrive in the nursery. They are extremely happy and thoroughly settled and form very close, loving relationships with staff. Babies confidently, and frequently, approach staff for comfort and support and enjoy plenty of cuddles and physical affection. Staff fully understand and recognise all babies' individual needs. For example, staff clearly understand the younger babies' gestures and have a thorough knowledge of each babies' comfort needs and feeding preferences. This enables

staff to competently recognise when babies need feeding, changing, cuddles and comfort. All babies are held closely for bottle feeding and the cosy environment staff create, results in a very homely and relaxed atmosphere.

Babies enjoy extensive opportunities to explore using their senses. The younger babies confidently reach out for toys and enjoy exploring toys with buttons, lights, sounds and music. This enables babies to explore 'cause and effect' and develop cognitive skills. Babies delight in shaking rattles and listening to the different sounds. They gaze longingly at themselves in different mirrors and laugh and giggle at themselves. They explore many tactile experiences and enjoy handling textures such as jelly, water and paint.

Babies benefit greatly from the very close interaction from staff, who cuddle babies closely and engage in play with them. For example, older babies are encouraged to develop their imagination and re-enact familiar scenarios, such as a teddy bears' picnic. Babies delight in 'feeding' the teddies and then extend the game by pretending to feed themselves with spoons, clearly imitating familiar feeding routines.

Older babies begin to show an interest in one another, and through gentle interaction from staff, learn to play alongside one another. For example, babies play with sand together and enjoy participating in musical activities with staff, confidently joining in with actions. They laugh together and delight in clapping at the end of each song.

Staff have a thorough understanding of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and use this effectively as a basis for planning for each baby's development. The ground floor rooms of the nursery are organised effectively into different 'zones' enabling babies to play with different equipment and enjoy a wealth of different learning experiences. For example, in the Sensory Zone, babies show wonder and curiosity as they play with chocolate play dough. They delight in smelling the dough and digging their fingers in to make prints. In the Mark Making Zone, babies enjoy experimenting with pens and writing materials and in the Quiet Zone, babies enjoy sharing books and looking at pictures with staff. This enables babies to experience a wide range of play opportunities which capture their interests and focus their attention, enabling them to think, experiment and make discoveries as they explore the nursery environment.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Staff are committed to implementing anti-discriminatory practice in all areas of the nursery. As a result, all babies are treated equally and fairly. For example, staff are very aware of each baby's individual needs and this enables them to plan appropriately challenging and stimulating activities for each baby. All babies are regarded as individuals within the nursery and detailed information is obtained from parents regarding each baby's personal routine and general welfare needs. This ensures that staff can then address these issues fully. For example, babies follow their own personal sleep and feeding patterns. They are weaned in accordance with their own developmental needs and only after consultation and agreement with parents. This reflects the staff's commitment to treating all babies fairly.

Babies with specific needs are supported well and staff are experienced in caring for babies with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. This reflects the nursery's policy of providing a fully inclusive environment.

Staff manage babies' behaviour effectively. They use age-appropriate strategies and focus on creating a happy, positive and busy environment, ensuring that all babies are fully stimulated and engaged in purposeful activity. Babies enjoy close interaction from staff and benefit from plenty of individual attention. Staff recognise and endorse positive behaviour. As a result, older babies happily clap one another and staff actively praise each baby. This helps to create a very positive atmosphere. Staff use consistent strategies to manage behaviour, in accordance with each baby's developmental understanding. For example, unacceptable behaviour is avoided as staff use distraction and diversion techniques to channel children's interests and attention.

Staff are committed to working closely with all parents. This ensures consistency for babies between the routines followed at home and nursery. Staff ensure that most care routines are fully discussed and agreed. Staff offer parents plenty of time each day to discuss any care needs and offer a very relaxed and welcoming environment for parents. There is a wealth of written information provided for parents regarding the management of the nursery, including named staff photographs. This enables parents to fully understand all nursery policies and procedures and to be fully informed about their baby's care routines. Parents share information with staff regarding their baby's developmental progress. This enables parents and staff to work in partnership to understand each baby's developmental needs.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The nursery is organised effectively. Staff are competent in their roles and many staff hold professional qualifications. All staff benefit from further training, including first aid, food hygiene and child protection. This enhances staff's skills and contributes towards the high standards of care provided.

There are effective procedures in place to ensure that all staff are appropriately vetted and cleared to work with babies and young children. Company policy states that any uncleared staff are not given unsupervised access to babies. This safeguards all babies.

The effective organisation of the nursery greatly enhances babies' play and learning opportunities. Babies are able to move around the nursery freely and safely and choose their own activities. This enables them to develop fundamental skills for learning, such as confidence, independence and social skills, such as sharing and co-operation. The premises are organised effectively to meet the care needs of babies. For example, staff caring for the youngest babies on the first floor have easy access to a milk kitchen and the sleep area for babies is fully incorporated into the group area. This enables staff to closely monitor the youngest babies when they are sleeping inside.

There are comprehensive written policies, reflecting the smooth organisation of the nursery. All staff are very familiar with all company policies and procedures and implement these in daily practice. An accurate record of attendance is in place, ensuring that a full record of all babies, staff and visitors is consistently maintained. All babies' records and documentation are stored securely and contain most necessary detail.

The setting meets the needs of the range of babies for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since registration.

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.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

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WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- review the sleeping arrangements for babies who sleep outside, to ensure babies can sleep comfortably and safely and in accordance with parents' written wishes

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk