



Acorn at Cedars

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY290049
Inspection date	28 November 2005
Inspector	Dorcas Elizabeth Forgan
Setting Address	Cedars County Combined School, Bury Street, Newport Pagnell, Buckinghamshire, MK16 0DT
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Registered person	Acorn Childcare Ltd
Type of inspection	Childcare
Type of care	Full day care, Out of School 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 at Cedars Out Of School Provision registered in 2004 and the nursery registered in 2005. They are managed by Acorn Childcare Limited and operate from Cedars Combined School in Newport Pagnell, Buckinghamshire. The building is a single story, self-contained property. A maximum of 29 children may attend the facility under the age of 8 years.

There are currently 32 children on the roll. The setting offer support for children who speak English as a second language.

Children attend the out of school provision from within the school for a variety of sessions and hours. The breakfast club is open term time from 08:00 to 08:50 and the after school session is from 11:30 to 18:00. The playscheme is open during school holidays from 08:00 to 18:00. The nursery is open 51 weeks of the year from 08:00 to 18:00 and provides care for children from the surrounding area.

Currently 4 staff work with the children. There are 2 staff, including the manager, who hold appropriate early years qualifications. There is 1 member of staff working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a warm, clean, bright, well-maintained and stimulating environment. They stay healthy because practitioners follow current health and hygiene guidance, policies and procedures. Children are learning the importance of good personal hygiene through regular routines and consistent guidance. For example, they are encouraged to help themselves to tissues to blow their noses, and to wash their hands after completing messy activities and using the toilet. Children are able to rest and sleep as they feel necessary. They are learning about their body's needs.

Children enjoy a good range of energetic physical activity that contributes to a healthy life style. They benefit from very regular use of the outside area where they play with a varied selection of toys and equipment. They can practise skills such as sliding, peddling, ball skills and playing in the sand. They also enjoy regular walks to the parks to play on the equipment and to feed the ducks.

Children benefit from a healthy, nutritious diet. They help themselves to drinks of water as they need them. Snacks and meal times are social occasions when children are encouraged to chat to each other and the staff and enjoy their meals. Snacks are healthy options, often fruit. The nursery children have cooked meals provided by the staff and the out of school children have packed lunches that are provided by their parents. Staff take account of the parents' wishes and comply with dietary requirements to ensure the children remain healthy.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Good procedures ensure the children's safety in a very well organised environment. Risks of accidental injury are minimised as the staff regularly use thorough risk assessments to reduce hazards, especially in specific areas, for example the security of the main door. There are effective safety and security precautions in place, such as the procedure for others to collect children.

Children move around safely and independently. They are able to select from a good

range of stimulating, well-organised activities and resources. The equipment in the nursery is very good quality and well maintained. However, there is nowhere for staff to sit comfortably whilst feeding or comforting a baby. Staff help children to learn to keep themselves safe by showing them how to use oven gloves to hold a warm bowl whilst doing a cooking activity. Children learn to tidy the toys away when finished so that no-one steps on them and is hurt. This helps the children learn to take responsibility for keeping themselves safe.

Children are well protected because staff understand their role in child protection and are able to put appropriate practices in place when necessary. There is a clear policy which is accessible to the parents. Some of the staff have attended specific training.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enter the group eagerly, they are inquisitive to see the activities and settle very quickly. They are gaining confidence and self-esteem through being part of a very positive, friendly environment. Children are making good friends and they play happily together, such as a group of children who built enclosures for the animals. They receive a great deal of individual attention to support and guide them, especially in the nursery. All of the children choose what activity they would like to take part in and are gaining independence. Some initiate their own games such as sorting the sound bottles, having listened to them and looked at their contents.

Children benefit from the staff planning the activities to meet their needs. The activities offered to the younger children are based on the framework Birth to Three Matters and all elements are included. They become confident communicators as they work co-operatively together in tasks such as building a train track. Children make good use of the creative materials and imaginary resources to become competent learners. The children who attend the out of school facilities are offered activities that are sometimes less structured so that they are able to relax after a morning in the school nursery. These include cooking activities and helping to make displays. All of the children enjoy the various books in the 2 comfortable reading areas. New children who find it difficult to settle are treated very sensitively and strategies are developed with the parents for the child's welfare.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children have formed very good relations; they are all warmly welcomed into the group. They are learning about the local environment through walks to the parks that are nearby and joining the story time at the library. Children from a variety of ethnic backgrounds receive very good support and appropriate individual attention. The children learn to respect one another's views as they are introduced by the staff to different cultures, beliefs and traditions. Such as when a parent helped the children to celebrate Divali. However, the range of resources and equipment that promote positive images of diversity are limited. The staff are developing their procedures and

knowledge to support children with special needs in the future.

Children work harmoniously with others. They behave very well; staff praise the children and give clear explanations of their expectations, leading to a nurturing environment. Children are learning to be polite and have good table manners; they are gaining very good self-esteem.

Partnership with parents and carers is very good. Children benefit from parents' effective involvement in the nursery. Parents are well informed about the nursery through the prospectus, notice board, newsletter and daily verbal exchanges of information. The staff have begun to make observations of the children in the nursery to show their developmental progress. There are no formal means to exchange these with the parents yet.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children flourish from their care being very well organised. Managers at Acorn Head Office, who carry out a thorough employee selection and induction process, support the setting. The staff are expected to undergo further training and supervision which is comprehensive and ensures that they have a good understanding of children's development and their roles and responsibilities. The policies and procedures are in place and are working documents which are effective in keeping the children healthy while safeguarding their welfare. Staff very competently support children in their care, learning and play because of the very good staff ratios and deployment.

The children benefit from the close links which the nursery are developing with the school to ensure that the transfer from school to out of school care, and day nursery to school, are smooth and trouble-free. The manager and staff in the nursery are taking the opportunity to put in place systems and paperwork that will be effective when the nursery supports further families. They are developing their skills and putting into place good practice. The provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable

Complaints since the last inspection

There are no complaints to report.

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):

- ensure the staff are able to sit comfortably when feeding and holding babies
- extend the range of resources available to reflect positive images of cultures, gender and disabilities

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