



## Acorn Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY318095
<b>Inspection date</b>	21 June 2006
<b>Inspector</b>	Jill Steer
<b>Setting Address</b>	The Rise, Portslade, Brighton, East Sussex, BN41 2PY
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<b>Registered person</b>	Brighton & Hove City Council
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).

## THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

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.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

### WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Acorn Nursery is run by Sure Start. It opened in 2006 and operates from newly designed, purpose built premises. It is situated within a new housing development in Portslade. A maximum of 60 children may attend the nursery at any one time, 15 of whom may be under two years. The nursery is open each weekday from 08.00 to 18.00 for 51 weeks of the year. All children share access to an enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 57 children aged from six months to under five years on roll. Of these 21 children receive funding for early education. Children attend primarily from within the local postcode district. The nursery currently supports two children with learning difficulties, and also supports one child who speaks English as an additional language.

The nursery employs four full time, and seven part time members of staff. Of these, nine hold appropriate early years qualifications and one member of staff is working towards a qualification. Acorn nursery receives support from the local authority.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are well protected because staff take positive steps to prevent the spread of infection during personal care and daily routines. For example, appropriate nappy disposal and storage procedures are followed in the changing areas. Children develop simple, good hygiene practices which protect them from the spread of infection. They are encouraged to wash their hands after using the toilet and before eating food, and the arrangement of the facilities enables them to manage independently, developing their confidence. However, some children do not wash their hands, and others use the opportunity to play in the cubicles if they are not supervised. Children are each given a clean, wet flannel after eating to clean their own faces, but the lack of mirrors prevents them from seeing how successfully they have managed, and some children remain dirty.

Staff sit with the children as they eat, but do not take the opportunity to talk about the food being healthy, and how it affects their growing bodies. Mealtimes become disorganised as staff move around dealing with tasks such as getting cutlery and deserts for children. This results in children leaving the table to look for help opening food containers, and losing interest in their meal because they have waited too long for a spoon to eat with. Children visit the snack café when the 'Open' sign is displayed, and help themselves from the selection of fresh fruit which is cut up by the staff for them. When the café is closed, children can help themselves to a drink throughout the day.

Children explore, test and develop physical control in stimulating daily indoor and outdoor experiences, and by using a good range of play equipment. The soft safety surface of the outdoor play area provides opportunities for all children, including the babies to increase their confidence and to try out new skills. Staff have a keen knowledge of Birth to Three Matters which gives them an excellent understanding of each child's stage of development. Older children develop a positive attitude to physical exercise and delight in the challenges set out for them in a versatile range of activities. Good provision is made for children and babies to rest and sleep according to their needs in comfortable surroundings.

## **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are well cared for in a welcoming and generally safe environment. Regular risk assessments enable staff to identify and minimise any potential risks, and ensure relevant precautions are taken. Such as asking parents not to hold the security doors open for other people. Children learn some sense of danger and how to keep themselves safe as they move between the different areas of the nursery during their play. The outdoor play area is totally covered in a soft safety surface providing a safe area for children's care, play and learning. However, although this area benefits from the sunshine throughout the day, there is no shade to protect children from its harmful rays, and access is possible for anyone through the gate in the fencing, which prevents them enjoying a wider and more fulfilling range of activities and experiences.

Children enjoy an excellent range of high quality toys and play equipment which is organised effectively to meet the children's developing needs and is maintained in a clean and safe condition. Babies and toddlers use good quality nursery equipment and enjoy an excellent range of toys and resources which are safe and appropriate to their age and stage of development.

The welfare of the children is well protected because staff have a clear understanding of the nursery's child protection policy, and their responsibility if they have concerns that any child is at risk of abuse.

## **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is good.

Children are happy, confident and settled within the nursery setting. A team of experienced staff develop stable relationships with the children which helps them to achieve well and fosters their emotional wellbeing. All children arrive enthusiastically to enjoy a stimulating, bright environment in which they have opportunities to enjoy free flow play. They are eager to participate in the wide range of activities provided and have positive attitudes towards learning. Staff are beginning to use guidance such as the Birth to three matters framework to plan activities for younger children to ensure they are offered a variety of interesting experiences, such as creative play. Staff support children well, providing them with plenty of praise and encouragement. They help children express their thoughts and ideas and follow their individual interests.

Children and babies become competent learners as they begin to make sense of the world and express their ideas and feelings. Staff working with babies have a good understanding of their needs, they are mindful of babies' individual routines and work in partnership with parents to meet them. Babies receive lots of cuddles and attention, which helps them settle quickly. They enjoy exploring the sand, scooping it on to the floor and rubbing it with their feet, showing pleasure with gurgling sounds and smiles. Staff interaction is good, they spend time talking, looking at books, and singing rhymes to the babies to foster early communication and language

development.

## Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. A well-balanced curriculum ensures children have a wide range of experiences that supports their learning in all areas. Observations help identify children's stages of learning, but these are not recorded in any way, so do not help staff effectively plan the next steps in learning for each child. Children enjoy participating in themed activities which are well planned, often based on ideas taken from their own play, and presented with positive learning intentions. For example, when two children played 'going to Cornwall on holiday', it became the inspiration for a future topic. Staff use their sound knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage and stepping stones across all areas of learning to provide activities with sufficient challenge for the children. However, some activities are prepared entirely by staff which deprives more able children from the challenge of a more fulfilling experience. For example, during a craft activity all the collage pieces were pre-cut for the children to stick on the paper. Children show extended concentration and pleasure in topic related and independent learning activities.

Children explore descriptive language in group discussions and are confident to express their ideas. They enjoy books and stories with adults and peers, for instance they listen attentively as they study a book about caterpillars and butterflies, and delight in the story of the very hungry caterpillar. Children make sense of the world around them through stimulating and creative projects and individual art work. For example, children learn about the lifecycle of the caterpillar and how it has to eat a lot to grow before it can become a butterfly. Children have excellent opportunities to explore a wide range of experiences which enable them to develop their senses and express themselves creatively.

Children access writing materials easily which enables them to practice and develop their skills independently and in many situations. They begin to understand that letters and words have meaning, and books can be for reference as well as stories. For example, while looking at a book about a butterfly during group time, staff suggest they look for a label to tell them what the details of the picture are. There are many opportunities throughout the day for children to develop their understanding of number, calculation and shape. They use mathematical language appropriately and understand concepts such as full, empty, heavy and light.

## **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is good.

Children are treated with respect, helping them to feel good about themselves. They show a strong sense of belonging, developing their confidence and self-esteem, because of the positive example set by the staff and the caring and nurturing environment. Children are becoming aware of diversity within a wider society through planned activities, and as they celebrate their own and other cultural beliefs. This positive approach fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.

Staff are good role models who encourage the children to behave well. They are calm, consistent and polite, creating a harmonious environment where people care about each other. Good behaviour is acknowledged for both children and staff, by the wearing of a golden crown for the day, proudly highlighting their achievement. Staff ensure children with special educational and additional needs are welcome and are fully included in the life of the setting. Children and parents receive a warm welcome into the nursery by friendly and approachable staff. Staff manage children's behaviour sensitively and effectively, increasing children's understanding of right and wrong by using simple strategies which children understand. The consistent boundaries and high expectations help the older children to negotiate with others and take responsibility for their own behaviour. Staff support the younger children extremely well encouraging them to share fairly and take turns.

The partnership with parents is good. All children are valued as individuals and their needs are effectively met using the information gathered from parents. Parents are kept informed about their children's care and development but staff do not clearly inform them about the on-going assessment process relating to the stepping stones and early learning goals. Regular newsletters keep parents informed about termly activities and topics within the nursery. However, they receive limited information about the learning programme and the Foundation Stage.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Children are comfortable and at ease in the nursery because staff create a relaxed and welcoming environment. The effective recruitment and vetting procedures ensure children are well protected and cared for by staff with a secure knowledge and understanding of child development. The staff team is well established and work extremely well together, supporting each other as well as the children and their families. Staff training needs are identified and management effectively support their individual development. All policies and procedures are in place to promote children's wellbeing, and are regularly updated to ensure staff are aware of current best practice. Group sizes are organised to ensure suitable staff ratios are maintained throughout the day. However, due to the free flow arrangement where children move about independently, there are occasions when they lack direct supervision and support.

Leadership and Management is good. The effective leadership and management of the provision and the educational programme enable children to make good progress towards the early learning goals. All staff have a good understanding of the Foundation Stage and contribute to the curriculum planning, providing a comprehensive timetable of play based learning. Management evaluate the service provided and there is a strong commitment to creating a rich learning environment for children. Leadership and management ensure staff are motivated and well trained to ensure they can fulfil their individual roles effectively. Overall, the setting 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 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 AND NURSERY EDUCATION**

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.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

## **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):

- improve opportunities for children to play outdoors safely by providing areas of shade and restricting direct access from outside
- review deployment of staff to ensure children receive sufficient supervision and support at all times whilst ensuring opportunities exist for their developing independence in both daily routines and during organised activities

### **The quality and standards of the nursery education**

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

- document observations made of children, and clearly show how these are used to inform future planning to identify the next steps in children's learning, through planned activities which provide sufficient challenge for all children
- improve information shared with parents regarding daily planning and children's developmental progress

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