



Acorn Preschool

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	110050
Inspection date	17 November 2006
Inspector	Coral Hales
Setting Address	Holy Road Church, Gosport Road, Fareham, Hampshire, PO14 2AS
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Registered person	Holy Road Church Centre
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Sessional 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 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 Pre-school opened in 2000 and is privately managed. It operates from the church hall in Stubbington, Fareham, an urban area of Hampshire. A maximum of 26 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The group is open each weekday in term time only from 09:30 to 12 noon and 12:30 to 15:00 except for Wednesdays when it is open 12:30 to 15:00. Children have access to an enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 41 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 31 children receive funding for early education. Children who attend the group come from the local surrounding areas. The pre-school currently support children who speak English as an additional language and have good support systems in place for any child with special educational needs.

The pre-school employs nine members of staff. Of these, six hold appropriate early years qualifications, four to level two and two to level three. The group has just completed the Pre-School Learning Alliance Accreditation Scheme and is awaiting the outcome.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are encouraged to develop good hygiene practices by the staff and arrangements for health and safety are effective. They routinely wash their hands after messy play, after using the toilet and before snack, and learn how to look after their teeth following a visit from the dental nurse. Children's good health is promoted because staff have efficient recording systems in place relating to accidents and medication. Most staff are qualified in first aid and are able to treat children appropriately if they were to be involved in an accident. Emergency treatment/advice consents for the children are maintained.

Children are learning the importance of a healthy diet and enjoy a good range of healthy snacks and drinks, which contribute to their good health. For example, they help to make their own sandwich for snack and enjoy a good variety of fruit. Children have access to fresh drinking water and drinks at snack time served in jugs and they choose and pour either orange, blackcurrant, milk or water. They enjoy the opportunities given for taking responsibility at snack time.

Children explore, test and develop control through a range of activities to help them develop their physical skills. They play with a variety of large equipment and a good selection of small equipment for example, stilts, stepping stones, balancing beams and they enjoy using cars and bicycles and ride in and out of cones. Children sometimes play in the outside area and occasionally go out for walks.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are provided with warm and welcoming rooms that are well laid out and these provide a comfortable and secure environment for them. Children are kept safe as they play because staff are vigilant and risk assessments are carried out regularly. High priority is given to reducing the risk of accident or injury and staff supervise the children well especially as they change areas within the building. There are good procedures in place for the safe arrival and collection of children. All required fire safety equipment is in place and children regularly practise emergency evacuations.

Children are provided with suitable and safe resources and these are well set out and children move easily and safely around the environment. They freely select from the well-maintained range of toys and equipment available for use which supports their learning well.

Children are safeguarded by staff and management who are aware of their role in child protection issues and understand their professional duty regarding children's safety. Staff have a good

understanding of known indicators of abuse and procedures to follow and have attended recent training.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enjoy their time in the pre-school, they achieve well because staff are knowledgeable and use their good understanding of early years guidance, such as the foundation stage and their growing knowledge of the Birth to three matters framework to provide quality care and education. Effective use of time, the accommodation and resources helps the children's learning. They are able to access activities independently, make choices within their learning and have time to complete activities. Staff are directly involved in their learning. The session is well paced which ensures that children are fully engaged and do not become disruptive.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a sound knowledge of the curriculum, which they use well to plan interesting activities for all children, including those with special educational needs. Children enjoy taking part in stimulating and interesting activities and interactive toys and resources are well used to support their learning. Staff have created a calm environment where children can work productively, ask questions and grow in confidence. Staff appropriately structure the day into free play sessions where children choose from a range of activities they can work on individually or undertake adult directed activities. However staff do not often plan activities to include the outdoor area or local community. Planning does not identify the learning objectives and some challenges set do not sufficiently extend those who are more able. Good support is given to children who are less confident or those who require additional help. Assessment records are completed, staff make observations as the children play and these are added to the files which are accessible to the parents for viewing. These observations are working effectively to track children's progress. The younger children's records are in line with the Birth to three framework guidance.

Children relate well to each other and are keen to engage with the staff who offer clear expectations and set achievable boundaries which help children feel secure. Children enjoy themselves and are helped to achieve and they communicate easily with each other and have positive relationships with the staff. They are confident to talk in large group situations such as circle time, and to converse with each other whilst playing. They persevere and take turns for example, as they act out different roles whilst taking part in 'vets' role-play. Children settle well into the session and are familiar with the daily routines and are secure and confident within the environment. They become independent in most areas and are sensitive to their own needs and begin to deal with the needs of others. Children practise their early reading and writing skills. They recognise their names on cards that are used regularly, however children do not often have opportunity to sound out the letters of their name and to have this learning extended. They read to themselves as well as enjoying a story with others for example 'The Biggest Bear' and sit fascinated as a puppet is used effectively to promote a story. Children are able to write for a purpose and colour, create and make patterns using coloured pens which they handle well and make appointments and take notes at the 'vets'. Children use a good range of mathematical equipment that very effectively supports their learning. They gain confidence as they look at

books showing small and big thus introducing them to opposites. They recognise numerals and count spontaneously, and use developing mathematical ideas as they play board games with staff. Children show a developing knowledge of simple addition and subtraction and recognise shapes and use words to describe size and quantity as they play, create and take part in planned activities. Children develop increasing interest and knowledge of the wider world and help to support and raise funds for underprivileged children in Africa. They also help to fill shoe boxes with equipment for children in Romania. Children have some awareness of their own community, however this is not regularly planned into the curriculum. Children use simple working technology well in their play as for example, they use the 'x-ray machine' in the vets, converse on their mobile phones or program an interactive toy. They talk about the weather, the day, the month and the season with confidence when asked. Children build and construct with a wide range of objects, for example they create an aeroplane and describe how it is going to fly to 'Stralia' and 'Mars' or maybe the 'Moon'. They experience festivals regularly and their knowledge of other cultures is promoted through their charity fundraising. Children respond excitedly to a wide range of creative activities. They sing favourite songs with gusto, and enjoy playing games such as 'Sleeping Rabbits'. Children enjoy all craft activities that are planned, they explore colour and discuss 'green' at circle time. They use their imagination well as they play with under the sea resources, looking closely at shells and as they take part in role-play. Children develop good manipulative skills and eye-hand co-ordination through the wide range of construction play, and when handling small tools and equipment, for example, they use scissors well as they cut straws as they complete a task. Children enjoy taking part in a range of physical activities indoors that help them to develop their confidence and skills. This learning is well supported with a good range of equipment being used. They are developing a positive attitude towards physical exercise and a growing awareness of how it can help them to stay healthy.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are valued and adults help them to feel good about themselves by frequently providing good levels of support and encouragement. Children are looked after in a caring environment and are treated with respect and equal concern and their individual needs are met well. Any special requirements are discussed with parents and consistent communication and information exchange takes place. A named Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) is in place to ensure children's special needs are recognised and met sensitively.

Children behave well because staff work consistently as a team to manage behaviour in a positive manner and adapt strategies appropriately according to children's maturity. Praise is given freely to children, ensuring that they develop confidence and self-esteem and understand when they have done well. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents is good. Parents and staff share what they know about the child's interests, achievements and learning. Parents receive relevant information about the pre-school and regular newsletters keep them up to date with topics items of interest. They are supportive, interested and keen to be part of their child's learning. The pre-school has a complaints log in place, however the policy which is available to parents is not up-to-date and does not reflect

the recent changes. Therefore parents are not fully aware of action to take should they have any concerns.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The pre-school offers a welcoming environment where children are happy and settled. Staff are caring, motivated and experienced and are well deployed throughout the session and offer children support and encouragement with their learning. Children's care is enhanced by the effective organisation of the pre-school. Children feel at ease with the environment and this enables them to feel confident, which is conducive to their play and learning. Staff know their roles and responsibilities and effectively implement routines to give children effective support and encouragement. Records are in generally good order and documents are completed as required.

Leadership and management is good. The experienced team work well together towards common goals and meet together regularly. Steps are taken to plan ahead and the group has systems in place to monitor and evaluate the provision. This enables staff to identify their strengths and weaknesses and new appraisal systems are in place. Recruitment and vetting procedures ensure that staff are suitable and appropriately qualified. Staff have just completed their accreditation Quality Scheme and are awaiting the outcome. They regularly attend training and future courses are booked for 2007. The management and staff have good working relationships with parents and seek their comments and act upon them as necessary. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Following the last care inspection the staff were asked to further develop their qualifications, devise a comprehensive induction programme and ensure that they dealt with child protection issues effectively.

Relevant documentation has been updated and new staff receive an induction and a written format is completed and dated. Staff have attended training to ensure that the ratio of qualified staff are in place as required and have also updated their knowledge of child protection issues and all are aware of their roles and responsibilities. All issues have therefore been addressed and children's welfare is maintained.

At the last education inspection staff were asked to evaluate and improve the organisation and availability of resources, particularly in the creative area and improve the use of children's assessments to inform planning. Staff were required to pay particular attention to providing opportunities for the older children to write and recognise familiar words. The staff put together an action plan which has worked effectively. Children's assessments now link directly to the planning and highlight and track progress. Staff have developed new systems that monitor children's achievements and this is working well. Children have many opportunities to look at print, make marks and write for a purpose including good use in the role-play area and freely access resources set out. This has improved children's education and allows them to achieve well.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 1 April 2004 there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards. The provider is required to keep a record of complaint made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

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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 parents are made aware of the new complaints procedure and that the address of the regulator is correct to enable parents to raise concerns if required

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):

- ensure that questioning and challenges set for children allow their learning to be extended to enable them to achieve their potential
- further develop planning to ensure that learning intentions are clear and that all areas of learning are covered with reference to the local community and use of the outdoor area

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