

Acorn Day Nursery Ltd

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	148596
Inspection date	09 November 2006
Inspector	Glenda Pownall
Setting Address	532 Reading Road, Winnersh, Wokingham, Berkshire, RG41 5EX
Telephone number	0118 9786483
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Registered person	Acorn Day Nursery Ltd
Type of inspection	Integrated
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 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?

Acorns Day Nursery is run by Acorns Day Nursery Limited and is privately owned. It opened in 2001 and operates from four rooms in a converted private house. It is situated in Winnersh on the outskirts of Wokingham, Berkshire. A maximum of 45 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 8.00 to 18.00 for 51 weeks of the year. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 59 children aged from three months to under five years on roll. Of these, 19 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the local area. The nursery currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and disabilities, and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 17 staff. The manager and 14 staff hold appropriate early years qualifications and one member of staff is a qualified early years teacher. There is one staff member working towards a qualification. The nursery has a rabbit.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children develop good personal hygiene routines through effective daily routines and staff practice. Staff replace cutlery children drop on the floor and remind children to wash their hands before mealtimes and after visiting the toilet. As a result, children learn when to wash their hands. For example, a child who is in the digging pit shows the palms of their hands to a visitor and says 'look all dirty, I need to wash my hands'. Staff follow efficient systems for the recording of accidents and medication. These include sharing the records with parents and documenting existing injuries children arrive with. Almost all staff hold a current first aid certificate enabling them to give appropriate care to children if there is an accident. This ensures the children's welfare is paramount.

Children have their individual dietary needs met because staff work closely with parents and follow any individual requirements. The management take account of the wishes of parents and provides nutritious meals that appeal to children and meet their dietary needs. Food and drink is stored appropriately and this reduces the risk to children's health. Staff encourage good social interaction by enabling children to sit together with them for mealtimes. Staff interact warmly with babies whilst feeding them in high chairs and whilst holding young babies feeding from bottles. This develops a sense of belonging. Fresh drinking water is available at all times to children in the Apples and Pears rooms and they confidently help themselves. This encourages children to think about their own personal needs. Staff follow babies' individual routines for eating and sleeping. This supports continuity of care and contributes to their physical well-being.

Babies and toddlers learn to control their own bodies gaining physical skills appropriate to their stage of development. All children experience outside physical play on a daily basis. Each morning children in Apples and Pears can freely move between indoor and outdoor activities. They thoroughly enjoy getting into the soil and sand pits to dig and move wheel barrows full of soil around the garden. They confidently manoeuvre wheeled toys, such as 'ped-a-rollers', with skill around the environment demonstrating spatial awareness. Staff plan a range of activities to extend children's physical abilities including music and movement, soft play and balancing. There is a variety of equipment in the garden including climbing frames and slides to develop children's balance and co-ordination. However, children can not use this equipment all the time as staff do not always dry it ready for use. Children say 'I like the garden the best'.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Friendly staff, notice boards displaying useful information and children's work displayed all through the nursery provide a welcoming setting for children and parents. Children benefit from playing in a clean, well organised environment that allows them to move around and play safely. They have easy access to a good range of toys and resources appropriate for their age. However, the set up of the computer station is not conducive to children's health or learning as the screen is too high for children to use comfortably. Very young children and babies can crawl and learn to walk in a child friendly environment. Staff regularly check sleeping babies to ensure their safety and well-being.

There are excellent systems in place for the safe arrival and departure of children and to prevent unwanted visitors gaining access. Staff deployment is good and guarantees children are well-supervised at all times. There are comprehensive policies in place to promote children's safety. Daily risk assessments take place in each room and outside to minimise hazards to children. However, staff do not always complete the written checklists to confirm the risk assessment has been conducted to ensure the safety of children. Children learn to keep themselves safe by the positive rules of the setting and good explanations given by staff.

Children are safe from harm because staff have a good understanding of child protection issues and know how to proceed if they have concerns about a child in their care. The detailed policies of the setting follow the procedures of the Berkshire Safeguarding Children's Board. This ensures that any action taken is in line with current regulations.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children develop warm relationships with staff. They also enjoy each others company and have fun together. This contributes to their sense of belonging. Young children enjoy listening to stories and learn about the meaning of words through staff's expressive reading. Children join in with the words they know when staff spontaneously sing a song related to the story they are reading. Staff respond positively to the sounds and gestures young children and babies make. This develops confidence and language skills.

Children become independent as they choose resources and activities for themselves. For example, sitting babies reach out to grasp resources made of a variety of textures and materials that are positioned within their range. Crawling babies freely manoeuvre across the floor to bang on drums and pick up books. Staff rotate the toys and equipment regularly to sustain children's interest and enjoyment. Young children and babies explore and experiment through a range of well planned activities that are appropriate for their stage of development. Staff use the Birth to three matters framework to support their planning and to chart the progress of young children.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have good knowledge of the early learning goals and implement this through a well planned range of activities covering all areas of learning. They understand how activities link to the stepping stones and ask open-ended questions to encourage children to think. Each day the area of learning the focus activity relates to is rotated to ensure all children are included. Staff carry out regular observations of children as they play at self chosen activities and use these observations to plan children's next steps in learning. However, staff evaluate the focus activities each day. Some of these evaluations relate to individual children and others are general comments only, neither are used to update individual children's progress records to support the extending of children's learning.

Children are secure in the nursery environment. They confidently initiate conversations with visitors and readily volunteer to speak in front of the whole group. Children use language effectively as they describe the sight and sound of the fireworks they have seen. They are polite and raise their hands to answer questions in group situations. Children acquire independence skills as they change their shoes and coats to play outside. They have constant access to a wide range of resources to build up small muscle skills and make marks. Staff encourage all children to attempt to write their name on their work and some do this using clear, recognisable letters.

Through daily activities children develop understanding of phonics and recognise the initial letter sound of their names.

Children enjoy singing number songs and rhymes to increase their understanding of simple calculation. They are adept at sorting and matching resources by colour and shape. Children persevere at activities as they design and construct using a good range of resources, selecting and rejecting pieces to reach the desired outcome. They follow simple programme instructions and click and drag the mouse to complete tasks on the computer. Children draw, paint and chalk freely and staff encourage children to learn different techniques, such as splatter painting. Imaginative play often flows from inside to outdoors as children plot stories and agree roles.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children talk happily about their home life and things that are important to them. Children do not go on outings and there are few visitors to the setting from the local community. However, staff have a positive attitude towards diversity and children become aware of their own and other cultures through a range of resources, planned activities and as they celebrate a variety of festivals. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. There are effective systems in place to support children with learning difficulties and disabilities. Close liaison with parents ensures all children's needs are met. Staff treat children with respect and use lots of praise and encouragement to promote their self-esteem. They are good role models helping children learn the importance of showing respect for all. As a result, children behave very well with any disputes being sorted out amicably. Children share, take turns and are polite to others.

Partnership with parents is good. Parents have daily access to the records of their child's progress along the stepping stones because the document is kept in their child's tray. There is usually one parents' evening a year where parents can attend to find out about their child's progress. Parents are invited to approach staff to discuss children's development in the setting and to share their child's learning at home. However, staff are not proactive in discussing children's learning outside of the setting with parents. They do not keep all parents regularly informed of their child's progress and targeted next steps to enhance children's learning.

Parents are given detailed information about the setting and its policies prior to children starting in the nursery. Staff provide daily sheets or diaries for children under three giving parents information about their child's daily activities, food intake and sleep. This provides children with consistent care between home and nursery. A poster with the contact details of the regulator is displayed to parents enabling them to comment on the childcare their children receive. Parent questionnaires enable parents to comment on the provision. This promotes the welfare of children. Parents are very happy with the care and social interaction between staff and children. They welcome the setting's positive response to the feedback given through the questionnaires.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are very happy in the nursery because of the warm relationships that exist between all within the setting. Staff show a clear understanding of their role in nurturing children in their play and work effectively as a team. This promotes a positive care and learning environment for children. The manager has good knowledge of her responsibilities with regard to the national standards and the owner works in the nursery to monitor the effectiveness of the provision.

There are excellent recruitment and vetting procedures in place that are followed to safeguard children. Staff generally follow the very detailed policies and procedures of the setting and all required documents for the efficient management of the setting are in place. This contributes to the welfare of children. However, although there is a system in place for staff to check the contents of the first aid kits, a number of the items are well past the expiry date. A record is kept of staff attendance but the room registers do not consistently record where staff are working in the nursery. As a result, there is no accurate record of this available in case of emergency or for future reference. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Leadership and management of the nursery education are good. There is a strong commitment to providing a varied and interesting curriculum to enable children to develop in all areas of learning. The manager monitors the education programme and quality of teaching through observing staff practice and lesson plans. She shares her findings with staff informally, through the appraisal system and regular staff meetings. This system is not sufficiently rigorous to ensure the effective use of evaluation of planned activities or parents comments to support the planning of children's next steps in learning. The manager has highlighted the system for identifying children's next steps in learning as an area for improvement.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the provision was asked to record medication records confidentially and ensure the complaints procedure includes the contact details of the regulator and provide parents with this information.

Medication requests are recorded confidentially on individual sheets and the contact details of the regulator are

displayed in the entrance hall to parents and included in the setting's policy. This promotes the welfare of children.

The provision was also asked to provide children with opportunities to count and use numbers, promote the use of the book corner and develop systems to identify and develop children's individual progress.

Children have daily opportunities to count as part of routine activities. For example, they confidently count how many children are sitting at the snack table and how many cups are required. Fun activities encourage children to use and identify numbers. For example, they thoroughly enjoy fishing with rods to identify the numerals to 10. The book corner has comfy chairs provided and a variety of books displayed but children do not regularly select books for themselves. The manager is aware of this and is working with staff to further promote the book corner. However, children sit attentively and listen to the group stories that staff read.

Staff regularly update children's assessment records to show the progress individual children are making along the stepping stones. However, the current system does not incorporate all progress staff note to accurately record children's progress and further support their individual learning.

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 complaints 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):

- keep a daily record detailing where staff work in the nursery and monitor staff to ensure the health and safety policies and procedures of the setting are effectively followed
- review the set up of the computer station to ensure it is positioned appropriately for children to use.

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):

- effectively use the observations of children at planned activities to update children's progress records and use this information to inform their next steps in learning
- develop the system for sharing children's progress and next steps in learning with parents to ensure they are regularly informed of their child's progress along the stepping stones and are able to contribute to these records.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education* (HMI ref no 2599) which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk