



Little Acorns Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY332334
Inspection date	25 October 2006
Inspector	Karen Ann Byfleet
Setting Address	Stubley Lane, Dronfield, Derbyshire, S18 1LS
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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 inadequate - notice of action to improve. The registered person does not meet 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?

Little Acorns Nursery opened in April 2006. The nursery operates from the ground floor of premises situated in Dronfield, Derbyshire and serves families who live or work in the surrounding area. The nursery is privately owned and is registered for a maximum of 40 children under five years. There are currently 16 children on roll and of these three are in receipt of funded education. The nursery is open every weekday throughout the year, between 07.30 and 18.00, except for Bank Holidays and one week at Christmas. The setting receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is inadequate.

Children are developing a basic understanding of their personal hygiene as they are independent in their use of the toilet, hand washing and by brushing their teeth after meals. Staff follow clear procedures for nappy changing. They wear disposable aprons and gloves for each nappy change and record these appropriately on babies and toddlers daily information sheets. However, the overall cleanliness of the premises does not fully promote children's health and hygiene.

The kitchen area is unhygienic, the floors and work surfaces are not cleaned daily, there are no paper hand towels and dirty paint pots are placed on top of the sink where plates and cups are washed. The fridge and microwave are not cleaned regularly to ensure food is stored and cooked hygienically in order to prevent any infections or food related illnesses. When preparing and cooking the meals, the staff do not follow hygiene procedures, such as wearing appropriate aprons or washing their hands when entering the kitchen.

Staff have devised menus for snacks, lunches and teas and these are displayed where parents can see them. However, staff do not always adhere to the menu. The menu states it is raisins for mid-morning snack but these are not given as staff assume some children have had a late breakfast and may not want anything to eat at this time. They do not ask the children if they would like any, therefore, children's individual dietary needs around food choices are not always provided for. Food served to the children at lunch time consists of fresh vegetables. However, the soup is bland in colour and does not look appetising. Some children choose not to eat it and no alternative is offered.

All relevant documentation is in place with regard to children's health and welfare. Accident records are maintained confidentially and parents sign them when they collect the children. However, there is no consistency in obtaining written parental permission for staff to administer any medication or parents signing acknowledgement that it has been done. Two staff hold relevant first aid certificates at this time.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's safety is adequately maintained. The premises are kept secure, with the main door being locked and a door bell alerts staff to any visitors. All visitors to the setting are requested to sign in and out, ensuring staff are aware of who is on premises at any one time. Risk assessments of the outdoor play area are completed on a daily basis, further promoting children's safety. Staff check that the gates are locked and that the outside play area is free from any debris. They also check the safety of the toys before children go out to play. Emergency evacuation procedures are in place and are practised with the children, developing their understanding of safety in an emergency situation. A fire log book is maintained.

Space is organised appropriately with areas separated for the different aged children. For example, there is a baby room with a separate sleeping area and the main play room is divided

by low dividing boards. This ensures toddlers and older children have their own play space but are also able to interact. Children are supervised well by staff in all areas ensuring their safety is maintained. When taking the children on walks and visits into the local community, staff are developing children's understanding of safety through talking to the older children about road safety and the importance of holding hands. They ensure that babies are safely restrained in pushchairs.

Staff have attended relevant training in child protection and are aware of the setting's policy and procedures. The manager is fully aware of how to ensure any concerns are recorded and of the Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures to ensure the welfare of all children attending is safeguarded.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children within the nursery form good positive relationships with their peers and the staff. They are happy and settled within the environment, seeking out their friends. Staff working with the babies and toddlers plan a good range of worthwhile activities, and use the 'Birth to three matters' framework well to enhance their planning and provide stimulating activities. For example, babies enjoy musical toys, mirrors and mobiles which stimulate their senses. Staff adapt activities, enabling the babies and children under three to participate in all areas of the well planned activities. A key worker system is in place and assessments of babies' and toddler's development records are maintained and used to inform future planning, ensuring progress is monitored. Daily diaries are completed by staff and inform parents of what the babies and toddlers have enjoyed doing. Toddlers are beginning to understand the concept of sitting for short periods of time during group times. They enjoy listening to stories and join in with eagerness when they sing familiar songs, helping to develop their language skills and social relationships. Through regular outside play opportunities, all children are able to access a good range of equipment and resources which enhance their physical development. They enjoy riding the wheeled vehicles, playing ball games and using the climbing frame and swing. The babies are also able to enjoy these outdoor activities as a baby swing is also provided.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning of funded education is good. Children are making good progress towards the early learning goals. They have formed good relationships with their peers and the adults caring for them and they engage in a wide range of activities. Children make choices as they freely select equipment and are independent in their personal care. A good range of picture, story and reference books which they enjoy reading alone and together in a group at story time are easily accessible. They are arranged for the children in a comfortable, quiet seating area of the nursery. Through independent access to a good supply of writing materials, children practise writing for a purpose and develop their creativity. They are developing good skills in this area through well planned topics. For example, the 'travel agents' where the children have produced passports, travel tickets and post cards, using a variety of writing implements. Through self-registration, children are able to recognise their own name and some children are beginning to write their own name on their individual art work. Social skills are developing through circle time. Children have weekend diaries which they take home and

complete with their parents, drawing pictures about what they have been doing. This is then shared with the whole group and children enjoy sharing their news, developing their confidence to speak in groups and helping raise their self-esteem.

Children's mathematical development is encouraged through number recognition. A 'washing line' of numbers and number words enable the children to re-arrange into numerical order and is sited at child height on the wall. Through focussed activities they are learning about patterns and shapes and staff encourage the children with their numeric skills by asking them to count out cups and chairs at snack times and lunch times. A separate numeric area within the setting has a good range of resources such as peg boards, number puzzles and comparing activities which children freely access. Through well planned topics and themes, children are developing a good understanding of the wider world as they engage in activities which look at festivals and celebrations of different cultures. The role play area is well equipped with a variety of resources and children use their imagination well. For example, they have made a computer for the 'travel agents' from a cardboard box as the nursery does yet have a real one for them to access. The children engage with enthusiasm in activities which raise their curiosity in experiments and investigation. For example, in sand and water play they use a good range of apparatus, such as a water wheel to test how fast the water flows. However, there is a lack of resources at this time for children to expand on their experimental and investigative knowledge, although management do plan to increase resources in the near future.

Staff have a good knowledge and understanding of the 'Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage'. They plan a good range of activities using the observations they make of the children's progress and use these to inform future planning. A valuable key worker system is in place which allows staff to complete detailed assessments of children's learning and clearly show differentiation in their abilities, enabling staff to identify on the planning how they intend to move the children on in their learning and help them make good progress through the stepping stones. Staff have formed good strong relationships with the children and offer consistent praise and encouragement for their efforts and achievements.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are well behaved and staff have a good policy in place which they all understand and implement with consistency, ensuring all children are treated equally. Children have equal access to the full range of age-appropriate toys and resources and are able to make independent choices. Children are developing a good understanding of the wider world as they learn about different cultural celebrations and talk about countries around the world. They have good access to books, toys and other resources, such as posters around the setting, which promote positive images. The setting has good policies and procedures in place enabling them to give appropriate care to any children who have physical or learning disabilities or those who speak English as an additional language. Children are well behaved and through consistent practice by the staff children are offered positive praise for their efforts and achievements.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Staff take time to settle new children in and spend time with parents, gathering all relevant information around the individual care of their children. For example, dietary needs or requirements and medical history which is recorded confidentially.

A notice board is placed in the reception area which is used for relevant information for parents, including the weekly menu, although this is not altered if the menu is changed on any one day. All new children and their parents are offered a settling in period which is individual to them. Planning is displayed for parents to access and through newsletters which are published each term parents are given information about forthcoming topics and events. Babies and toddlers have daily diaries which are completed by staff and give parents valuable information about their child's day in the nursery. For example, sleep times, nappy changes and food intakes. For the parents of children in receipt of funded education, they have a 'weekend diary' which they are encouraged to share with the children and write about any events that have happened at home, which the children can then share with the rest of the group during circle time.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. They are well behaved and respond well to the consistent expectations of the staff. Children are respected and treated as individuals, they are welcomed and valued. They are confident within the setting and show a sense of belonging to a wider group. Children show respect for others by listening to what others have to say and they share and take turns in group activities. Through planned topics, children have many opportunities to explore and gain awareness of different cultures and beliefs.

Organisation

The organisation is inadequate.

Children are relaxed and happy within the organised environment. Staff have a good understanding of the provision's policies and they share information with parents regularly. However, although all documentation is in place and children are well cared for, the overall hygiene of the premises is inadequate.

The leadership and management of nursery education is good. The management and staff recognise the provision's strengths and weaknesses and show commitment to addressing these areas for improvement to ensure children's progress continues. All staff are fully committed to ensuring children's needs are met and staff hold monthly meetings to discuss any issues and training. Equality of opportunity is promoted, ensuring all children are making good progress. Staff working in the setting are vetted to ensure children are cared for by adults who are suitable to do so. Until all checks are clear, staff are not left alone with children, ensuring their safety and well-being is promoted.

The provision does not meet the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since registration 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, the registered person **must** take the following actions:

- Promote children's health by ensuring premises and food preparation areas are clean and well maintained in accordance with environmental health regulations
- Ensure written parental permission is consistently obtained before administering any medication to children.
- Ensure food offered to children is prepared hygienically and presented to children in an appetising way

These actions are set out in a *notice of action to improve* and must be completed by the date specified in the notice.

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):

- continue to develop practice to ensure children have opportunities to explore and investigate using a range of resources to enhance their understanding and progress in all areas of learning.

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