



Little Acorns Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	318602
Inspection date	30 January 2007
Inspector	Lynne Pope
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Registered person	The Dan Leisure Group
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 satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Little Acorns Nursery is one of ten provisions run by an organisation. It opened in 1998 and operates from purpose built premises in Washington. A maximum of 98 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each week day from 07.30 until 18.00 for 52 weeks of the year.

There are currently 92 children aged from three months to four years on roll. Of these 25 children receive funding for early education. The Nursery serves staff from the Asda Distribution Centre and the general public.

The nursery employs 21 staff. Of these, 15 hold appropriate early years qualifications and five are working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children have access to spacious playrooms where there is a satisfactory state of decoration and cleanliness. Children aged over two years are aware of good procedures to follow when using the bathroom to wash their hands and clean their teeth after meals. However, staff are not consistent in the provision as they do not ensure that all children wash their hands before meals. Children are kept safe from the spread of infection by an effective sickness policy being in place. Appropriate consents and records are in place for the administration of medication and the recording of accidents. Accident records are monitored regularly to ensure that procedures can be put in place to minimise risks for children.

Children are developing knowledge and understanding of how exercise helps them to stay healthy. They enthusiastically take an active part in physical exercise outdoors, learning about the importance of activity in a healthy lifestyle. For example, they run around and steer their bikes around obstacles. Young children are taken on regular trips into the local environment. However, written plans do not cover physical activity.

Children's well-being is enhanced as they access healthy snacks and meals. For example, they try healthy options, such as different fruits. They enjoy the positive experience of sitting together as they chat to each other about what they have been doing. However, harnesses on babies' high chairs are not regularly cleaned to a satisfactory level. Children are able to rest or sleep as they need.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The playrooms and corridors are made welcoming with displays of children's art work and photographs of activities, giving them ownership of the environment. Some are at child height where children can appreciate them and feel a sense of ownership. The indoor space is organised effectively, enabling children to explore and take risks while being supervised. They use a satisfactory range of safe, well maintained toys and equipment suitable to the age and stage of their development. They are confident as they develop their independence well, accessing resources freely for themselves.

Children are cared for in a very secure environment and are well protected by the procedures in place. All visitors to the building are monitored. Regular fire drills are carried out with the children so that they are aware of the routine. Children develop a good awareness of their own safety through sensitive reminders, such as not to run in the rooms or trip over resources on the floor. Babies and young children sleep safely and are comfortable. They are frequently monitored. Outings procedures' protect children. Staff carry out a written risk assessment before the outing and gain written consent from parents.

Children are well protected by staff that are confident and secure in their knowledge of child protection policies and procedures. They give high priority to children's welfare.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Staff in the setting provide a calm, consistent environment where children are happy and settled. Children build good relationships with staff and peers. They experience a varied range of activities which contribute to their development in the setting. Children under the age of two years take part in painting and water activities. They play in the ball pool where they kick their feet moving the balls and pick them up to examine them. Books are enjoyed as they look at them in small groups, pointing to the picture and asking what is it. Children aged two to three-years manage to do simple jigsaws, play with construction blocks and use their imagination in the home corner. Staff get down to children's level, joining in with their play, extending their play as they talk to them. They plan activities based on the 'Birth to three matters' framework, which helps them to focus on age-appropriate steps for the children. Development records are maintained which follow the child through the nursery. Children take part in physical activities, however, they are not identified in written plans to show how they would be adapted for different abilities, the role of adults or resources and equipment needed.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff have an adequate knowledge of the Foundation Stage. They manage children's behaviour well. Children have been involved in the setting of behaviour rules which has helped them to understand what is or is not acceptable. Plans are in place to cover the majority of the stepping stones. However, they do not identify challenge and support for the individual child or how the stepping stone will be achieved. Regular observations are carried out of the children taking part in activities. These are entered in the child's development file. However, they are not used to assist in planning the next steps in children's learning and development. Opportunities are not identified for children to learn about or compare two groups of objects or show an interest in number problems. Most of the routine of the day is planned well. However, the organisation for children using the bathroom to prepare for snack and lunch is prolonged which results in children's time not being used productively for the whole of the session.

Children settle well on arrival. They are happy to be left by their parents. They are very confident when they speak to visitors, staff and each other. They join in well at group times as they request which songs to sing or suggest what might happen next in the story. Opportunities are available for them to make marks on paper around the room. They are beginning to draw recognisable pictures, for example, of their eyes and themselves. Children enjoy using number in everyday contexts. They count as they line up or ask for certain numbers to be written on their pictures. Their confidence is growing as they begin to recognise written numbers, such as two, five or six. Knowledge of space and shape is gained through everyday activities as they pour water or sand from one container to another. Size language such as big or small is used.

Information technology supports children's learning well as they confidently control the mouse to make the programme work on the computer. They use construction materials with confidence, building towers with plastic blocks. Tools are used for a purpose as children roll out playdough and use cutters for desired effect. Their imagination is promoted well as they use appropriate resources to pretend they are at the hairdressers combing each others hair.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children develop a positive attitude towards others and gain a good understanding about the wider world. They take outings into the local environment or have visitors in, such as the fire brigade. Some resources reflect positive images for children. However, there are no reflections of disability. Staff are calm and consistent in their approach to behaviour management. They use timely interventions where they use distraction or clear instruction which protects the child. Positive behaviour is encouraged through praise which develops children's self-esteem and confidence. This positive approach fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Children are beginning to learn to cooperate well together. They share resources such as books. Older children play together in small groups as they share the same interests.

Partnership with parents is good. Children benefit from a two-way sharing of information between staff and parents which enhances their learning. Parents receive either a written report or for older children a verbal update about their child on a daily basis. They receive a written report on their child's progress every three to six months and are able to attend a parents evening every six months to discuss their child's development. Newsletters are produced every two months to inform them about what the nursery is doing and any future events. Children settle well as a result of staff working closely with parents. Positive feedback was received from parents who stated they were happy with the standard of care that their child receives.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides. The required policies and procedures are in place which support the care of the children. All records are kept up to date and are available on the premises. Children have access to age-appropriate, spacious playrooms to aid their development. There is a satisfactory balance of indoor and outdoor play. However, written plans do not cover physical activity to extend learning. In practise staff work towards keeping children healthy and safeguard their welfare.

The leadership and management is satisfactory. Regular appraisals and staff meetings enable future training to be identified and carried out. All staff hold up to date first aid certificates. The manager has an overall view of the setting. She meets regularly with staff and observes practise within the playrooms. However, staff have not planned to cover calculation with children to develop their awareness. Management of time with children over three years is not used productively all of the time. The manager is aware of some of the weaknesses that have been identified at this inspection. For example, regarding planning and evaluation. Staff are accessing training through the local early years department to raise their awareness further of the Foundation Stage.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the previous nursery education inspection, points for consideration were raised to improve opportunities for children to weigh and measure in spontaneous activities and to increase opportunities for children to construct with larger items. To improve the quality of teaching,

to ensure that staff exploit spontaneous opportunities to increase children's knowledge and to effectively evaluate the impact of activities on children's learning, their achievements and any learning difficulties.

Children use various jugs in the water as they estimate if the water from one jug will fit into another. They use different resources to see if they weigh the same. Large boxes are used for children to create large scale models with. Children have the opportunity to select what they would like to do. Staff join in with their activities. However, activities are not evaluated. This is addressed in the main body of the report. Observations are carried out of children's activities which are recorded in their development file. However, they are not used to inform future planning. This is addressed in the main body of the report.

At the previous day care inspection it was recommended that the nursery consolidate and update existing knowledge of behaviour management. To continue to review the appropriateness of door design in relation to children's safety. To ensure that all records relating to day care are available on the premises. That an effective monitoring system to ensure that all records meets the minimum standard and to ensure that all staff are fully aware of child protection procedures.

Staff have attended training for behaviour management. At this inspection they used a calm, consistent manner with children. Children were well behaved. Viewing panels have been added to the door into the baby room to ensure their safety when some one enters the room. All records were accurate and up to date. They were readily accessible on the premises. Staff demonstrated a good awareness of the child protection policies and procedures to ensure children's welfare.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection 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):

- ensure that regular maintenance and cleanliness checks are carried out on safety harnesses on the highchairs
- ensure that all children have the opportunity to wash their hands before meals
- ensure that plans cover activities outdoors, how children are organised, the resources and equipment needed and the desired learning outcome
- develop resources further to reflect positive reflections of disability.

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 plans identify challenge and support needed by the individual and the desired learning outcome
- evaluate activities to assist in planning the next steps in children's learning and development
- develop opportunities for children to learn about comparing two groups of objects and to show an interest in number problems.
- ensure that the routine of the session does not involve children in lining up for long periods of time, so that their time is spent productively.

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