



Acorn Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY340856
Inspection date	27 February 2007
Inspector	Mark Evans
Setting Address	Burton Park, Polwell Lane, Burton Latimer, Kettering, NN15 5PS
Telephone number	01536 726700
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Registered person	Acorn Childcare 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?

Acorn Day Nursery is one of several provisions run by Acorn Childcare Ltd. It was registered in August 2006 and operates from purpose built premises at Burton Park in Burton Latimer, Northamptonshire. The nursery is open each weekday from 07:45 to 18:15 for 51 weeks of the year. Facilities include a kitchen, staff room, office, two meeting rooms, toilet and wash areas, children's accommodation rooms and an enclosed outdoor play area.

The nursery is registered to receive a maximum of 65 children at any one time and has 48 children on roll. This includes 24 children aged three and four years who are funded for nursery education. The setting supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language.

There are 16 staff employed to work with the children. Thirteen staff have a Level 3 early years qualification, of whom two are working towards a Level 4 qualification. One staff member has a Level 2 qualification and is near completion of a Level 3. The nursery employs a qualified early years teacher to support the provision of nursery education. The setting is a member of the National Day Nursery Association and receives support from a local authority advisory teacher.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a clean nursery environment, which helps to keep them healthy. They become increasingly independent in their personal care because they have suitable access to child-height toilets, washbasins and mirrors. Children begin to develop awareness of personal hygiene through daily routines, such as washing their hands before eating and using toothpaste with toothbrushes to maintain dental health. However, some hygiene practices used by staff, for example, when changing children's nappies, do not fully reduce the risk of spread of infection and there are occasions where children do not use soap when washing their hands. This potentially compromises children's health. Babies have a clean and suitable environment for their care needs. For example, adults are asked to remove their shoes prior to entering the room and fresh bedding is provided each time a child needs to sleep. Children receive appropriate attention in the event of an accident because there are suitable numbers of staff with current first aid training and there are fully stocked first aid boxes available. Children have medication administered according to parent consent and instruction and accidents are recorded and shared with parents. These aspects help to monitor and give continuity to support children's well-being.

Children enjoy nutritious meals and snacks, which are balanced and varied and they benefit from provision of a healthy diet. For example, they have fresh ingredients in their meals, which include protein foods, vegetables and carbohydrates. Children have foods that meet with their dietary requirements to ensure that they remain healthy. The setting provides for children's preferences and parental choices and has an alternative vegetarian meal each day. Babies and young children have suitably prepared foods and eat and feed at times according to their needs. This includes written details, agreed with parents, for feeding babies who are being weaned. Children can access drinks throughout the day because there are jugs of water and cups available for them to use. This ensures that they are well hydrated and comfortable.

Staff use the 'Birth to three matters' framework to provide a range of physical play experiences for babies and children under the age of three. They are able to rest and be active according to their needs. Children following the Foundation Stage develop their skills as they take part in a variety of daily physical activities. They regularly play outside throughout the year; they have opportunities to observe the natural environment and benefit from the fresh air and exercise. Most children can negotiate obstacles and each other as they walk, run and use mobile ride-on toys. They are able to climb and slide on small sized apparatus and enjoy challenge with physical activities, such as walking on balancing equipment.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The nursery building is designed and purpose built for providing childcare. Good levels of décor, displays of children's paintings and artwork, photographs of staff and information for parents help to make the building warm and welcoming. Children experience a well presented, light and airy premises and outdoor play area that are interesting and well maintained. This provides safe and comfortable accommodation for their care and play. Staff ensure good levels of supervision and make sure that there are sufficient staff available when undertaking other duties. Security of the building is monitored and all visitors are vetted before entry. Written risk assessments are completed and reviewed to help reduce risk. As a consequence, children keep safe.

Children use a wide range of safe, good quality and developmentally appropriate resources. These are well-organised in child height storage units to encourage independent access. Children develop good understanding of safe practices, for example, staff talk about road safety on trips out, include them in evacuation practises and discuss safety with regard to carrying scissors and not walking with a toothbrushes in their mouth. Children's welfare is safeguarded because staff have good knowledge of child protection issues and procedures. This is supported by a written child protection policy and relevant guidance.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enjoy their time in the nursery. Babies and young children receive cuddles and supportive contact and have good relationships with staff. This increases their sense of security and well-being. They benefit from regular discussion with parents and sharing of care records, such as feeding needs, sleeping patterns and activities they have experienced. Use of the 'Birth to three matters' framework gives babies and young children experiences that help them to develop and progress. Staff use their observations of what children can do to plan for what they could usefully do next. Children between the age of one and three are confident in their relationships with practitioners. They begin to play happily with each other and with adults and they enjoy using natural materials, puzzles, small world play, books, role play and outdoor equipment.

Nursery Education

Children are happy, enjoy their time at the nursery and show a positive attitude to learning. They are confident and play on their own and with others. Children behave well and develop good relationships with adults and their peers. They are motivated and engage in a broad range of developmentally appropriate activities which provide challenge and stimulation.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have good knowledge of the Foundation Stage. They have responsibility for observation of key children and are involved in planning of the curriculum for funded children. There are regular meetings where staff plan an interesting range of activities to provide learning opportunities in all six areas using the Foundation Stage guidance. Their full involvement in these processes helps to secure their knowledge of the

stepping stones. Although observations on children are completed for all areas of learning, children's assessments do not always show their level of achievement for the Foundation Stage. However, staff use their knowledge of the children to build on what they already know and use this to differentiate for varying abilities. Planning usually indicates the learning intentions for focussed activities, however, on occasions this is not consistently detailed. Adult led activities are often excellent and effectively stimulate interest and extend children's learning. For example, in developing children's phonic knowledge, the nursery teacher groups children to account for their stage of development and uses props and her teaching skills to fully engage them in the activity. Staff use their knowledge of what children are interested in to encourage their participation and learning, for example, building and constructing a pirate ship out of large wooden blocks.

All staff work directly with the children and provide an environment that is organised to help children to be independent and make choices. Children's behaviour is managed well. They respond to staff requests and learn from explanation of the consequences.

Children show good levels of concentration and involvement in activities. They interact cooperatively in group activities and within their play. Children are developing good levels of independence, for example, with their personal care for toileting and in using opportunities to make decisions about snacks and pour their own drinks. Children recognise their own name and use opportunities to make marks and write for purpose. For example, they use pencils and paper to make lists when in the toy shop role play. Children enjoy books and show good interest in stories read by adults. More able children are developing very good ability with phonic knowledge and show enjoyment and confidence with practical opportunities to link sounds to letters.

Children are aware of simple positional language, for example, when an object is on or off a surface. They sing songs that include numbers and simple subtraction, for example, by singing 'five current buns' and using props to take away by one at a time. They are developing ability to number small groups of items without counting them and to count reliably. They start to use mathematics to solve problems, such as the number of cups required for the number of children present. Children can match and judge space through use of resources such as puzzles. They look at quantity and size, making judgement about comparison for height and length.

Children use information technology very well, including a computer and programmable toys to support their play and learning. They are able to construct and shape, for example, when using construction toys, selecting and joining household items and in using malleable materials. Children plant bulbs and observe creatures such as tadpoles so that they can study and appreciate living things and patterns of change. They have a sense of place within their local community and early developing awareness of the wider community through activities and resources that represent diversity.

Children enjoy singing and music and explore different sounds and ways to use instruments, for example, to use them loudly and softly. They use a variety of role play settings to develop their imagination and enact their life experiences. Use of various materials encourages children to be creative and to investigate. For example, they make models and collages and use water,

sand and malleable materials. Children respond to their senses and have opportunities to explore this, for example, children describe how tree bark feels rough and not smooth.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children and parents are welcomed into the setting by a friendly staff group. Parents receive a variety of written details for the nursery, including a prospectus, which includes policies and information about routines and staffing and periodic newsletters to inform of various aspects, such as changes to staffing, planned events and new developments. Regular communication between staff and parents strengthens links between home and the nursery and encourages sound levels of continuity of care for the children. For example, staff give time to talk to parents on arrival or when collecting their child and parents with babies receive written information each day to inform them of important aspects of care, such as food intake and sleeping. Children are generally well behaved and cooperative. Staff approach behaviour according to children's individual needs and ensure that they praise them to secure their self-esteem and confidence. Children respond to staff who explain the consequences of their actions, helping them to understand why the behaviour is not appropriate. However, the setting does not have a named staff member who has responsibility for behaviour management issues and this potentially restricts support for children who may have behavioural needs.

Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities integrate well because the setting is proactive in meeting their needs through appropriate liaison with parents and relevant agencies. They use specialist equipment to assist children's development and individual educational plans are devised for children to attain achievable targets and progress. Children's own culture and language is valued, for example, through shared use of words and associated pictures with all children to support those for whom English is an additional language. Children's knowledge of the wider community is developed through their involvement in activities and access to play materials and pictorial images. For example, they visit a local Chinese restaurant during the Chinese New Year period to meet other people and to experience cultural foods and environment. Following the visit they enjoy looking at displays and photographs to recall the event. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Children benefit from the very good relationships that staff have with their parents. The setting provides parents with good sources of information, which include a prospectus, a Foundation Stage booklet and displayed weekly plans for the children's activity programme. Staff and parents having periodic meetings to share important information on children's progress and children benefit from this exchange, which encourages a balanced approach to their education. Parents can have involvement in their child's learning, for example, they sometimes help to provide items of interest that link to particular activity themes and complete a weekend diary book with their child that is used for discussion in the nursery. Staff have ongoing contact with parents and regularly discuss their observations of the children.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Staff are deployed effectively, which supports supervision of children and provides opportunities for individual attention. There are high numbers of staff with level three childcare qualifications and this provides children with adults who have good knowledge and experience to support their care and learning. The setting has well presented policies and records that are designed to keep children healthy and safeguard their welfare, for example, child protection and medication records. However, records for children's attendance are not always consistently detailed and this potentially compromises their safety. Written procedures are in place for the vetting of new staff and include all aspects of checking suitability of adults working with children in order to keep them safe.

Leadership and management is good. The setting works closely with the local authority early years advisory team in establishing self reflection and progress. A qualified teacher is employed to provide guidance and support and is an excellent role model for other staff. The nursery has good systems to monitor the provision of nursery education, which involves regular meeting between the nursery manager and teacher. The managers involve all staff who work with funded children in planning of the curriculum for the Foundation Stage. This helps develop their knowledge and ownership of the activity programme. Their full involvement in this process also develops effective links with parents and secures their own understanding of nursery education. Staff development is managed well and includes appraisal meetings to identify training needs. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the 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.

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):

- make sure that staff use good hygiene practice to prevent the spread of infection
- ensure that there is a named staff member who has the responsibility for behaviour management issues and the skills to support other staff
- make sure that the daily record of the names of the children being looked after includes consistent details for their hours of attendance.

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):

- improve children's assessments so that they clearly indicate their stage of development
- ensure that planning consistently includes learning intentions for focussed activities.

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