



Acacia Care & Education

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	403347
Inspection date	09 February 2007
Inspector	Jill Milton
Setting Address	49 Witney Road, Eynsham, Witney, Oxfordshire, OX29 4PL
Telephone number	01865 884468
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Registered person	Acacia Care and Education 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 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?

Acacia Care and Education Day Nursery opened in November 2001 and is managed by a private limited company. It is one of three nurseries operating as The Oxford Nursery. The nursery is located in the village of Eynsham in rural Oxfordshire and the intake of children is from a wide area. The nursery operates from several rooms in a house located over two floors and there is an enclosed garden for outdoor play.

The nursery opens on weekdays, from 08.00 to 18.00, all year round. A maximum of 40 children may attend at any one time and there are currently 33 children on roll between the ages of six months and four years six months. Of these, 15 children are in receipt of nursery education funding.

The nursery employs eight staff to work with the children and also utilises supply staff from its two sister nurseries. Over half the adults have suitable qualifications and two are currently attending training courses. The nursery receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

The children receive positive messages about healthy living from staff at the nursery. They need little encouragement to go outdoors into the garden where they can play with a suitable range of equipment. Walks are possible into the large field behind the setting to allow some variety in outside play and older children benefit from direct access to outside from their room when the weather allows. Children enjoy action songs and they are learning how to find their own space and develop their co-ordination with movements like marching and clapping. Younger children receive encouragement to participate in these group times too to stimulate them to try movements to music.

Staff have appropriate preparations in place to care for children who are unwell. They have a rolling programme for first aid training and they have first aid supplies to hand which they check regularly. If children have an accident or require medication staff are familiar with how to correctly record information and work with parents. Children are learning how to keep themselves healthy as they wash their hands before eating or after visiting the toilet. The staff use antibacterial sprays around the nursery to maintain satisfactory hygiene standards. However some procedures associated with nappy changing and the storage and preparation of food do not minimise potential sources of cross-infection.

Children eat heartily at the nursery and have access to fluids through the day. They enjoy the freshly home cooked meals with fresh fruit and vegetables regularly on the menu. Children sample dishes from different cultures such as Russian soup or an Indonesian vegetable dish. Meal times are sociable and children make their own decisions about whether they are hungry, for example deciding if they want some breakfast or extra toast at tea-time. Staff work with parents to gather information about children's dietary needs and there is daily feedback on what the younger ones eat or drink. Children can rest and sleep as they need to and staff ensure they check on sleeping babies at regular intervals. There is an appropriate balance in the day to times of active play and more restful activities. After lunch children who do not need a sleep are happy to engage in more peaceful activities for a time, supported by the staff.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children play safely under the supervision of caring adults. They use rooms that are at comfortable temperatures in cold weather and the large windows let in plenty of natural light, enabling children to view the garden and road outside. Staff make the nursery attractive with examples of children's work and they label some displays. Children spend time in different rooms during the day and they experience a variety of indoor and outdoor environments. Children play with a satisfactory range of resources suitable for their ages although some

aspects show wear and tear, for example plastic coating peeling from the computer desk or wadding coming from a bouncing cradle.

Staff monitor the overall safety of the nursery and they keep documentary evidence of checks on electrical and fire safety equipment. Staff ensure children's safety by making use of passwords when a different adult is collecting a child and parents are familiar with this procedure. On a day-to-day basis staff use safety equipment like stair gates to help children play in a safe environment. However some potential hazards may be overlooked since rigorous daily risk assessments do not always take place.

Staff understand their roles and responsibilities with regard to child protection. They recognise the importance of updating their training in this area and they have adults on the team who know the appropriate steps to take if they have concerns for the welfare of a child.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children of all ages are keen to play and settle quickly into the nursery day when their parents and carers leave. Overall they have a wide range of activities and staff set different resources out each day to capture the children's interests. Children can see their own work on display and this includes items they work on as a group for the benefit of all, for example a large model of 'Jack Frost' in keeping with current topics. Younger and older children mix in the day to promote their social experiences. There is a good rapport between the staff and the children throughout the nursery.

The younger children spend time in rooms upstairs where they have a range of activities suited to their developmental needs. The staff are aware of the Birth to three matters framework and they use their developing understanding to plan activities. Children are able to engage in exploring a colourful range of toys and tactile activities to stimulate their senses. Children receive praise from staff to encourage them to try recently acquired skills like walking. Younger children can sleep following their own patterns and staff record information about their daily care routines for parents.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The children receiving nursery education funding are making steady progress towards the early learning goals. Staff have a reasonable understanding of the Foundation Stage and they use this to plan the curriculum. They take into consideration the six different areas of learning to ensure children have daily opportunities to engage in a suitable range of activities.

The children play sociably and are learning to share and take turns. They talk about their feelings, for example expressing what makes them feel scared after listening to the story about a bear hunt. Children are learning about others with different beliefs to their own family and they look at books that present them with positive images of the wider world. The arrangement of some areas and presentation of resources reduces children's ability to be independent.

Children enjoy listening to stories told by the staff and they give each other time to speak when coming together in a large group. Children like to play games with rhyming words and staff help them to learn some letter sounds. The children often visit a writing area where they use early mark-making to write letters and make use of envelopes. Children play with resources that help them develop an understanding of early mathematics. They play number games with staff and receive praise that helps them have a positive attitude to learning. Children take part in many activities that help to develop their co-ordination and hand to eye control.

Children are progressing steadily with their knowledge and understanding of the world. They use a computer with growing confidence and are proud to tell others when they complete a new task. They also show interest in making models from a selection of recycled materials. Children handle a range of materials and media and the staff ask for their responses. Whilst this provides a pleasant atmosphere for children's play the questions sometimes do not extend thinking. Children engage in imaginative play and they make up their own stories. They really enjoy singing and are familiar with a range of songs, using their voices and movements to accompany well-known choices. Children show concentration at activities of their choosing, spending time for example exploring a musical instrument until it produces a sound.

Staff assess the children's development in a satisfactory way. Recent introduction of new ideas requires time to see if the methods chosen are effective, though staff do already note children's progress towards the early learning goals. Staff have recently become aware of the need to use assessments of children's progress to plan their next steps in learning though there is no tried and tested method in place yet.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Staff greet the children warmly and the way they all collect in one room works well given the small numbers of children arriving early. Children straightaway make their own choices about whether to play or have some breakfast. When staff have been unavoidably absent they are keen to re-establish their close relationships with the children with extra cuddles, helping them to feel special. Children are gaining positive messages about people with different cultural or religious backgrounds to their own. Staff ensure a broad range of festivals are celebrated during the year and resources around the nursery reflect diversity in a positive way. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the children is fostered.

Although there are no children attending the nursery at present who have learning difficulties or disabilities the staff have preparations in place to support families. An adult on site has training and more staff are seeking courses to further their knowledge of this area. Staff speak to parents when they have concerns about the development of a child. The children behave well at nursery and respond to adult guidance. They show kindness to each other for example by putting an arm around a friend who is a bit tearful. The staff act as good role models in the way they speak to children and effective use is made of techniques like giving children choices. The in-house 'caring rules' are clearly on display for staff and parents so that all are clear about the behaviour policy of the nursery.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. The staff have cordial relationships with parents and the start and end of the day is a time for relaxed conversations. The parents have access to information about the educational curriculum and child records are freely available every day. Staff are starting to take photographs of children's achievements and make short written comments helping to share information with families. The nursery has set up ways for parents to contribute their ideas by the use of a suggestion box or detailed questionnaire. Feedback from parents about their satisfaction with the nursery, both verbally and in writing, is positive.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The policies and procedures for the smooth running of the nursery generally work well to support the care of the children. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides. Amendments to policy documents ensure they are in line with the requirements of the National Standards. The nursery has appropriate procedures in place for the recruitment and induction of new staff. Staff have a number of set procedures to use in their every day work though at times due to work pressure and staff changes there are some lapses. On occasions, for example, staff do not record a child's time of departure from the setting. Managerial staff cope well with unexpected situations, for example extreme winter weather, and their crisis management policy comes into action to ensure children, families and staff are safe.

The leadership and management are satisfactory. The staff are clear about their roles and they work together coping with changes to the organisation of rooms. They use these opportunities to think about how to improve standards to bring about benefits to the children by increasing their choices and social interactions. A promising start is in place to using self-evaluation to reflect on the nursery, though there is currently little reflection and evaluation of the nursery education. Staff have the opportunity to contribute to their professional development with appraisals and they access a reasonable selection of training to extend their knowledge. The staff can access a wide range of reference materials on site to support their planning of activities.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the staff were required to address two issues linked to hygiene practices and behaviour management. Staff prepared a clear written action plan and the steps listed can be seen working in the nursery. Staff follow the stated procedure for changing children's nappies closely and consistently use protective aprons and gloves. However the use of fabric cloths for wiping changing mats is a potential source of cross infection for children.

Staff now manage children's behaviour well and use some of the good ideas gleaned from outside training. The impact for the children is to encourage their good behaviour since they receive positive praise and encouragement. Strategies for managing unwanted behaviour are outlined in policy documents and staff are familiar with how to handle more challenging situations appropriately.

At the last inspection of nursery education the staff were asked to take into consideration children's differing abilities and rates of learning. Staff took on board advice from outside

professionals and used some detail in their planning to reflect how activities may be presented in different ways.

Staff were also required to provide children with more opportunities to link letters and sounds and to learn about numerals. There has been satisfactory progress with both these areas with more chances now for children to make steady gains in their early understanding of letters and numerals.

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):

- further develop hygiene procedures to protect children's health
- extend risk assessments to ensure potential hazards are identified and addressed
- ensure children's times of arrival and departure are consistently recorded

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):

- use assessments of children's progress to plan their next steps in learning
- provide children with more opportunities to develop their independence reviewing such aspects as the storage of personal belongings or the labelling and presentation of resources

- introduce a more effective system to review and evaluate the quality of the nursery education

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