



Ecton Acorns Preschool

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY296859
Inspection date	16 September 2005
Inspector	Rosemary Moore
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Registered person	Ecton Primary School
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Sessional care, Out of School 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?

Ecton Acorns Pre-School opened in 2004. It operates from Ecton Primary school in Ecton, Northampton, Northamptonshire. The pre-school have use of the central hall, a mobile classroom, separate kitchen, toilets and storage areas. There is space available for outside play. A maximum of 24 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. It is open from 09:15 to 11:45 on Monday to Friday, during school term time only.

There are currently 13 children from 2 to under 5 years on roll. Of these 5 children receive funding for nursery education. Children attend from the local area, including surrounding villages. The pre-school has systems in place to support children with special educational needs and children for whom English is an additional language.

The pre-school employs three regular staff, two of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications. The setting receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are following appropriate health and hygiene practices for example, as they wash their hands after messy play and after visiting the toilet. Staff effectively explain to the children the reasons behind these practices. This leads to children having an understanding about how these actions help to protect them.

Children are able to stay healthy as they are offered snacks of whole fruits, although alternatives varied from day to day. Their individual dietary needs are satisfactorily met as the staff liaise with the parents to ascertain any specific needs. Children learn the need to ask for drinks, and although drinking water is regularly given to children it is not easily accessible and this limits children's independent choice.

Children's physical development is supported through a satisfactory range of activities. They effectively use tools to roll and cut out shapes in dough. Children usually take part in outdoor play where they are able to climb on the climbing frame, slide, jump and ride on tricycles. Children move around with care therefore developing an understanding of their bodies and how to control movement. However, older or more able children do not have sufficient challenge made available to them.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a welcoming, safe and secure environment. Staff complete daily checks to ensure that the premises are suitable for the children to use, for example the outdoor area. Risk assessments have been completed and evacuation procedures are in place. Children learn about how to keep themselves safe through staff talking to them as they go out. Children listen for instructions, hold hands with their friends and carefully walk in a line to maintain their safety.

Children are well protected. When they arrive and leave the group a member of staff supervise the exits doors to ensure that they are escorted safety in and out of the building. When all children are present the door is locked and parents are asked to wait outside the door for collection. Children are learning how to keep themselves safe, for example, as the staff remind them to walk in pairs to the school hall. Staff have a good understanding of their role in child protection and if necessary, they are able to put appropriate policies and procedures into practice. This ensures that

children's welfare is safeguarded. All required documentation and paperwork is in place.

The children are able to use safe and suitable equipment which is clean and well maintained. They have opportunities to be independent in their play as they select from a range of resources.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children are happy and enjoy their time in the pre-school. They make satisfactory progress towards the early learning goals, however, this is not fully effective because practitioners do not have a secure knowledge of the Curriculum Guidance for the foundation stage and planning does not take full account of individual levels of development and the next steps in progress. There are a good range of resources, which support children's learning across most areas. Children generally show satisfactory levels of concentration and involvement in activities. Children's behaviour and consideration of others is good, they interact co-operatively within groups, share and take turns. They are developing some independence, for example, putting on dressing up clothes, although there are some missed opportunities especially at snack times. Children speak confidently and express their ideas effectively, for example, imaginative role play. Children are gaining some ability with numbers and follow simple patterns like threading beads. They are beginning to use some simple mathematical language and have some knowledge of space and shapes. However, children do not sufficiently compare numbers or measurement during practical activities for children to consolidate their mathematical development. Children begin to make sense of the world around them as they play with small world toys and relate to these, for example the dolls house and zoo, and they re-enact family roles whilst dressing up. They learn about the wider world through discussions and taking part in the celebration of festivals. Children are able to experiment with texture, for example they use paint and playdough regularly, giving children the opportunity to be creative. However, some activities are very adult directed which restricts the child's ability to explore the possibilities imaginatively.

The effectiveness of teaching towards the early learning goals is satisfactory. Staff have some understanding of the stepping stones and a system is used for the planning of activities. However, this does not sufficiently cover all areas of the early learning goals, or fully inform and support children's learning. Methods are in place to help assess children's progress, for example how good the children's knowledge is about colours. Although this is suitable for some children it does not meet the needs of individual children, for example by providing sufficient challenge for more able children who already know colours well.

Staff management of children's behaviour is well managed with appropriate systems to encourage children to learn to take responsibility for their own actions, for example the sand timer is used for sharing equipment and children understand these rules. Use of time and resources is not always well organised and planned, with staff

generally caring for children rather than using time effectively, therefore children make slow progress towards the early learning goals.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

The partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Children are effectively beginning to learn right from wrong through positive interaction from the staff. They are well behaved and staff quickly step in to give children responsibility for their own behaviour, for example by setting up and using a sand timer. They are very familiar with the routines and have a clear understanding of the rules. Children receive praise and encouragement as they complete their tasks. They enjoy helping the staff to tidy away the equipment at the end of the session.

Children from different backgrounds and those with special needs are welcomed in the pre-school. Children's individual needs are not always identified, therefore they are not fully supported because of the lack of knowledge in this area by the staff. Children acknowledge festivals and celebrations through the year and staff ensure that resources positively represent the children who attend. Children are introduced to activities to help them to learn about other people in the world and to be aware of differences in society. The provision fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Children's well being is effectively promoted through a satisfactory partnership with parents. Parents are warmly welcomed into the group. Sufficient information is given to the parents about the care of the children in the group. Parents receive newsletters and a notice board keeps them up to date with information. However, limited information is available to parents about the Foundation Stage and how the group supports children's learning. Parents have insufficient opportunities to make contributions to their children's assessment file.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are safe, secure and happy in premises which are suitable for their purpose. Space and resources are sufficient to allow children to make choices in their play, developing their own ideas independently and promote children's safety, welfare and development. Children are generally well supervised by staff. However, opportunities for the best use of staff are sometimes missed, and the routine is lost, for example children missed story time as parents had arrived. Most documentation which contributes to children's health, safety and well being is in place, this is currently being reviewed.

Leadership and management is satisfactory. Children generally benefit from activities which are pre-planned and set out to cover most areas of the curriculum. However, children are not always effectively challenged during activities to move them onto the next stages of development. Children make limited progress in some areas of

learning, especially mathematical development due to the current systems for assessment, evaluation and monitoring of their development and the quality of teaching in the provision. The management of the effective use of time is poor, which also has an impact on the quality of teaching within the setting.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the children who attend.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

There are no complaints to report.

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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 children have access to drinking water at all times
- ensure that staff have knowledge and understanding of children with special needs

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):

- develop more effective plans to ensure that children progress in all six areas of learning and that they are offered sufficient challenge to achieve their potential.
- ensure that information gained from parents as well as observation and assessment is used to help move children to the next stage in their learning

- introduce a system to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching, regularly review the child's progress and identify the next steps in their learning.

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