

Little Acorns Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY332334
Inspection date	17 April 2007
Inspector	Tara Street
Setting Address	Stubley Lane, Dronfield, Derbyshire, S18 1LS
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Registered person	Indra Kumari Athi
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?

Little Acorns Nursery was registered in 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 eight years. There are currently 35 children on roll and of these, four 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 good.

Children's health is well maintained. They are developing a good awareness of their own personal hygiene as they follow daily routines and are encouraged by the staff to be independent. They wash their hands after using the toilet, before snacks and after messy activities. This is further

promoted through appropriate discussions and the use of effective visual reminders, for example action pictures for hand washing are in the toilet which enhances children's awareness. Staff follow clear procedures for nappy changing. They wear disposable gloves for each nappy change and record these appropriately on babies and toddlers daily information sheets.

The premises are clean and generally well maintained. Staff follow a cleaning procedure to ensure food preparation areas and equipment are maintained to a suitable standard. However, some areas are not always maintained as consistently as others, potentially impacting on children's health. Children are appropriately cared for in an emergency as two staff hold relevant first aid certificates and all relevant documentation is in place with regard to children's health and welfare. Accident and medication records contain parental signatures ensuring they are fully informed of any injuries or treatment given. Written permission for seeking treatment in an emergency also supports children's welfare. A clear sickness policy offers parents information about exclusion periods for children who are unwell, ensuring children are not placed at risk of infection and illness.

Children are provided with a healthy and nutritious variety of snacks. They sit in small family groups with staff at meal times, making it a pleasant and social occasion. Children are provided with foods such as fresh fruit at snack time and enjoy freshly cooked meals at lunch time, for example, spaghetti bolognaise. Children are encouraged and supported to be independent at meal times. They confidently pour their own drinks and serve their own meals, with staff support, from the options available. Drinks of water are provided at meal times and children are able to access fresh drinking water throughout the day. Staff actively seek information about any individual dietary needs and ensure any food or drink provided is suitable for the children.

Children enjoy a full range of physical play activities both indoor and outside. They use a good range of large equipment for climbing and balancing as well as wheeled vehicles and ball games. Babies and toddlers are developing their locomotion and balance skills through a selection of push-and-pull toys. They are encouraged to develop their body awareness through planned and spontaneous music and movement activities, such as 'Heads, shoulders, knees and toes'. Children's understanding is further promoted through discussion and themed topics on healthy lifestyles. For example, children discuss how water and fruits, such as grapes and apples, help to keep their bodies strong. During the summer months, children enjoy time outdoors as staff take out a range of resources, such as jigsaw puzzles, painting and water activities. Children are well protected from the effects of the sun as they discuss sun safety and are encouraged to apply sun cream before going outside to play.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children benefit from warm and welcoming premises where the rooms and play areas are decorated attractively to stimulate their learning, such as, posters and their own creative art work. They have access to a range of appropriate toys and resources that meet their developmental needs, are clean and safe to use. Daily activities are suitably organised to enable children to make individual choices about their play and the large play area is separated to allow children of different ages appropriate space to play and rest. For example, there is a baby room with a separate sleeping area and the main play room is sectioned off by low dividing boards which allow children to play independently, whilst still being able to interact with other children in the room. Children's sense of belonging is promoted as they each have an individual coat peg to store their personal belongings and comfort objects.

Children are cared for in a setting where risks are identified and minimised and all reasonable steps taken to ensure they are cared for in a secure environment. Children experience good levels of supervision and appropriate safety equipment is in place to ensure hazards are reduced. Staff are well deployed within the setting and the premises are kept secure whilst children are present. They have a sound knowledge and understanding of risk assessments and carry out ongoing checks which enable children to play without risk of harm or injury. A policy and procedure for lost or uncollected children is in place and understood by all staff. Children are developing a good sense of safety because staff regularly practise an emergency escape drill with them, ensuring they are kept safe in an emergency.

Children's welfare is safeguarded as staff have a sound knowledge and understanding of their responsibilities with regard to child protection issues and procedures. All members of staff have attended training, which ensures they understand the procedures to follow if they have a concern. The manager is the designated child protection officer for the setting and is fully aware of the Local Safeguarding Children Board. A written statement relating to the child protection policies and procedures is made available for parents.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are very happy and settled within the environment. They have a warm, secure and caring relationship with the staff. The children are confident and keen to access the range of play activities on offer, such as puzzles, construction, collage, role play and hand printing activities. Children freely move from one area to another and are spontaneous in their play and interactions with other children and adults. Staff are enthusiastic and activities are undertaken with a sense of fun. They participate in children's play and learning and their comments are listened to and valued. Children are encouraged to experience activities that stimulate the senses, for example trays with soil to explore texture and smell. Babies enjoy a wide range of resources such as rattles, musical toys, mirrors and mobiles which stimulates their learning. 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 enthusiasm when they sing familiar songs, which helps to develop their language skills and social relationships.

Staff working with the babies and toddlers plan a good range of worthwhile activities. The toddler room uses the 'Birth to three matters' framework well to enhance their planning and provide stimulating activities. However the baby room has recently moved away from this method, as a result outcomes for this age range are not always identified. A good key worker system is in place and regular assessments of babies' and toddlers' progress are carried out, however these do not consistently record purposeful information and, as a result, children's next steps are not always clearly identified. Daily diaries are completed by staff which informs parents of what activities the children have enjoyed and any achievements.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning of funded education is good. Children make good progress towards the early learning goals. They are very responsive and are able to reason, readily question and have a positive approach to new experiences. They are enjoying a range of resources and equipment to develop their interests and play well alongside each other. They are confident and eagerly get involved in the activities on offer. Children concentrate well at individual activities, such as drawing a plant with chalks and within group activities where they discuss the different areas of a plant and the various shades of green. They behave very well

throughout the day, showing a caring attitude towards others as they invite them to join in with their play. For example, when a child wishes to pretend to be 'Bob the Builder' and cannot find the role play uniform, another child offers to help them to look for it. Most children are confident to speak in small groups and use language to express themselves. They are beginning to recognise their name through the labels on their draws and self-registration. Children are developing their mark making skills through a range of resources which they have independent access to. For example, children confidently use scissors and pencils to draw and cut out shapes, which develops their pencil control and hand eye co-ordination skills. Children's writing and letter recognition are further developed as they are supported to write their name on art work and all efforts are given praise. A good range of picture, story and reference books are easily accessible and children enjoy reading alone and together during group time.

Through a variety of planned activities children use and are beginning to understand a range of mathematical concepts, such as discussing the size of a range of straws and arranging them into long or short. Children enjoy activities like rearranging a 'washing line' of numbers into the correct numerical order, which develops their understanding of sequence and number recognition. Construction activities are planned in which children are able to sort different sized blocks and shapes, and use their imagination to build objects. Opportunities for spontaneous mathematical language, counting and calculating within daily activities are well used, such as, encouraging children to count out cups and chairs at meal times. Their understanding of time is developing well as staff discuss the routines of the day and when they occur. Children are beginning to recognise where the hands of the clock will be at certain times of the day, for example, 'Mummy will be here when the hands are at the number four'. Children are beginning to develop a sense of the wider world as they examine a range of objects and materials. They investigate the properties of magnets and explore the concept of recycling and being 'green'. Children are developing an understanding and sense of place through outings in the local community and are learning about growing and caring for plants. Their technology skills are developing as they experience opportunities to use battery operated calculators, shop tills and torches. They also have occasional use of the nursery computer to experience a range of programmes which develop their understanding of a range of topics.

Children's physical development is strongly promoted through a balanced programme of activities. Children's fine manipulative skills are enhanced with the use of small resources, such as using scissors during craft activities. As well as planned outdoor activities, free play sessions provide opportunities to run freely, balance on climbing equipment, catch, throw and kick balls. Children experience a range of fun games. They enjoy participating in music and movement activities where they develop their understanding of moving their bodies fast, slow, high and low. Children are fully supported to develop their potential and activities are adapted to ensure all can participate and experience success.

Children use their imagination and creative skills through a variety of activities. They enjoy a range of creative activities, for example, they create pictures of dinosaurs and explore the soil tray and the range of plastic insects within it. Children confidently name colours and shapes when painting and drawing and use a range of materials to express their ideas. Their imagination is further promoted as they use the role play area, which is changed regularly to offer stimulation. Children enjoy imagining they are doctors in a hospital or paramedics and travel agents. Staff support ensures children understand how to use this area and the varied range of resources available.

Staff have a good understanding of the Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage and ensure that all areas of learning are covered over a period of time. Staff know which aspect of

learning the activities are related to and record children's achievements on an ongoing basis. Detailed planning is in place, which focuses on learning through play and ensures the children are purposefully occupied. Assessments are carried out regularly through planned focused activities. All staff are involved in assessing children's progress and share this information with the appropriate key worker. However, recording of purposeful information is not always consistent which impacts on the clear identification of appropriate next steps in learning. Staff have formed strong relationships with children and offer consistent praise and encouragement for their efforts and achievements.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Staff treat all children with equal concern. The children have access to a suitable range of planned, age-appropriate toys and resources from which they are able to self-select, developing their independence and promoting free choice. Through visits into the local area, such as the civic centre and library, children are learning about their own community. Their knowledge and understanding of the wider world is developing well through planned activities, such as stories and topics. This is further developed through themes on Chinese New Year and holiday destinations. Children regularly use resources that reflect diversity, such as small world toys, books, puzzles and role play equipment that depict positive images of age, gender, ability and culture. The setting meets the needs of children with learning difficulties or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language. Staff have a good awareness of how to assess their individual needs and adapt activities to offer suitable levels of challenge. They work closely with parents to discuss children's needs and liaise with relevant specialists to ensure their requirements are met within normal routines.

Children are cared for in a secure environment where the emphasis is on positive behaviour. Staff apply consistent boundaries and offer regular praise to promote good behaviour and develop children's self-esteem. A behaviour management policy is in place and is shared with parents to ensure the care offered is appropriate. Children are very well behaved and respond well to discussions about behaviour. They happily share toys and take turns with equipment. For example, children sit together and share buckets and spades when playing outside in the soil tray. Their knowledge and understanding of the rules is promoted well through discussion and general day to day interactions with the staff and other children. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children's ongoing care needs are well met as staff have daily verbal communication with parents. Clear written information is available to parents introducing them to the aims, policies and daily routines of the setting. Information about children's home routines such as, feeding habits and sleep routines, are gathered from parents to ensure continuity of care. Parents are provided with daily diary sheets which inform them of their child's day, routines and achievements. For example, babies' first steps are recorded, with details of how many steps to ensure parents feel involved and know about their child's successes. Parents are kept informed of the nursery routines through a notice board in reception, which contains information on topics and themes, menus and special events, such as, fun days. Parents value the friendly relationship they have with the staff and feel welcome and supported in the setting.

The partnership with parents and carers of children in receipt of funding for early education is good. Parents are appropriately informed about what children are expected to learn and can see the weekly planning. The setting provides parents with a clear information brochure, which helps them to understand the Foundation Stage and how children will progress towards the

early learning goals. Parents are encouraged to share what they know about their children through their child's 'weekend diary', which they are encouraged to share with the children and write about any special events that have occurred at home. Ongoing contact is maintained with parents through a key worker system, daily activity sheets and informal discussions about children's learning and development. The setting maintains individual development records and parents are aware that they can view their children's records on request and discuss these with staff. They also have access to their child's 'Blue book' which summarises their overall development, on a termly basis, in each area of learning and contains examples of their work products. Children's learning is progressing well because the key workers develop close relationships with parents and encourage them to continue some learning activities at home.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides. Children's care and welfare is well promoted as the staff team are appropriately qualified and deployed to provide sufficient levels of support for the children attending. Children are happy and relaxed within the environment and staff work well together to ensure children's needs are met. Children's records and staff details are stored securely and are available for inspection. There is a positive attitude towards training, which allows staff to continually increase their knowledge and experience to provide appropriate activities and care for children. All required policies and procedures are in place, enabling the provision to safeguard the children who attend.

Leadership and management of early education is good. Management is actively involved in all aspects of the provision and is aware of the strengths and weakness of nursery education. A continued commitment to address the areas for improvement is shown to ensure children's progress continues. There is a good understanding of the development needs of the staff and a clear training schedule is being developed to ensure core training, such as 'planning for the Foundation Stage' and child protection is in place. Staff have a sound understanding of their roles as key workers and work together well to share information and offer each other support. The manager and staff work closely with the local authority to monitor and evaluate the nursery provision to ensure children make progress, and to develop appropriate action plans to improve any identified areas to enable children's learning needs to be met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection three actions were set in relation to; ensuring written parental permission is consistently obtained before administering any medication to children and to promote children's health by ensuring premises and food preparation areas are clean and well maintained in accordance with environmental health regulations. They also agreed to ensure food offered to children is prepared hygienically and presented to children in an appetising way. Since the last inspection the setting has held a meeting to ensure staff are fully aware of the importance of gaining parents' prior written permission to administer any medication and that they have a clear understanding of the setting's policy and procedure, which ensures children's safety. The setting and staff have worked hard to develop their hygiene procedures and routines. All staff have attended an appropriate food hygiene course and the management has implemented a cleaning rota with designated staff members to ensure all areas of the nursery are suitably maintained and therefore prevent the spread of infection. Menus have been reviewed to ensure all meals and snacks offered are appetising in appearance and are stored, prepared and served in a hygienic way, which promotes children's health and well-being.

At the previous nursery education inspection the setting agreed to 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. The setting is continually developing its planning, and works closely as a team and with the local authority to ensure plans offer both planned and spontaneous opportunities for children to explore and investigate with a range of resources in all areas of learning, which promotes their overall development and learning.

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.

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):

- continue to monitor hygiene procedures to ensure they promote the good health of children and prevent the spread of infection
- continue to develop planning, particularly regarding the baby room, to provide activities in line with the 'Birth to three matters' framework

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 assessments to ensure purposeful information is recorded and next steps clearly identified (also applies to care)

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