

Acorns Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	199426
Inspection date	26 November 2007
Inspector	David Curtis
Setting Address	Church Road, Christian Malford, Chippenham, Wiltshire, SN15 4BW
Telephone number	Mobile 07816 280810
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Registered person	Acorns Playgroup
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?

Acorns Playgroup opened in 1972. It operates from one room, plus toilets and a kitchen in the grounds of Christian Malford Church of England Primary School. The playgroup serves the local area. There are currently 18 children from two to five years on roll; this includes eight children in receipt of nursery education funding. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The group supports children who learning difficulties and / or disabilities although there are none currently on roll. The group opens four days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 09:00 until 15:00. There are three full time staff working with children and all staff hold early year's qualifications. The setting receives support from a teacher/mentor from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are very aware of the importance of good hygiene. They know why they should wash their hands after going to the toilet and before having their snack and lunch. Each day, children

have a named and designated first-aider to whom they can turn if necessary. Any children who need medication have it administered in line with recommended procedures, with forms being countersigned by parents. The setting is clean, with the food preparation area being hygienic and not accessible to children.

Children enjoy eating healthy snacks and talk confidently about their favourite fruits. The introduction of a snack bar to replace snack time means that children now have greater choice and freedom as to when they eat their snacks. This promotes their independence. Children have regular access to water should they need a drink and this promotes their wellbeing. Staff talking with children at the snack bar, do not engage them sufficiently in discussing why it is important to eat healthily. Staff work successfully with parents to promote healthy lunchboxes for those who have lunch in the setting.

The setting plans and provides a good range of activities to promote children's physical development. The daily music and movement session is enjoyed by children, especially when 'Sticky Kids' is used as the theme because it motivates them to participate in physical exercise.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are safe, happy and secure in the setting because staff take every precaution to promote their wellbeing and safety. The physical environment is attractive and welcoming and resources and equipment are clean and well maintained. This encourages children to want to play and learn. Children benefit from a large outdoor play area, with a good range of toys and equipment which are safe and promote their physical development. However, most of the area is grass which, when wet, restricts opportunities for riding wheeled toys. The area provides limited shade from the sun, children are kept safe from over-exposure, as their use of it on very warm days is restricted.

Staff are vigilant in ensuring there are no hazards for children so that they are safe and secure. All staff have recent training in child protection and the leader is the designated person. Staff know exactly the procedures to follow should the need arise and this promotes children's safety and welfare.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enjoy being in the setting and make good progress in learning because staff plan an interesting and exciting range of activities for children to follow. There is a good balance of activities which children choose for themselves together with those that are led by adults. Children have regular access to outdoor play which promotes their physical development. Planned activities encourage both independence and co-operation. For example, individual children sustained good concentration in making models, such as an aeroplane, whilst a group worked successfully in putting up the Christmas decorations in the play house.

Children's good progress in all areas of learning is underpinned by a good range of resources. The book corner is attractive and promotes an interest in books. A very good range of construction kits supports children's physical and creative development especially well. Children enjoy using the computer and show good skills in using the mouse.

The quality of Teaching and learning is good. Children are supported well to make good progress in all areas of learning. Staff have a good understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum. Planning is good both at the termly and weekly levels and is linked closely to the stepping stones for each area of learning. A strength is the way in which weekly planning is reviewed and annotated for each child in order to inform what should happen in the following week. This is particularly helpful to children who may need to further consolidate a key skill or an activity. Assessment of children's learning is good, with daily assessments fed into children's individual assessment folders at the end of each week to ensure that future activities provide challenge. Staff readily build up a profile of children's progress against the stepping stones and at the end of the year this is passed to the primary school who find the information helpful.

Teaching of key skills is good, especially letter sounds and a love of reading. Good questioning by adults and the use of sessions, such as 'Circle Time' make a strong contribution to children's good progress in speaking and listening. Puzzles, games and counting activities promote and develop children's good progress in understanding number and shapes. Staff readily engage with children to support their good progress in all areas of learning. Staff manage children well and, for the most part, have high expectations for their behaviour. There is a strong commitment to personal, social and emotional development, through fostering independence and co-operation and children make good progress in their personal skills as a result.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children play happily together because staff promote equality of opportunity successfully. Through celebrating festivals, such as Diwali, and providing a good range of toys and resources, children's awareness of cultural diversity is raised successfully. Currently, the setting has no children identified with learning difficulties and /or disabilities although it is well equipped to do so should the need arise. One of the key workers is trained as a special educational needs co-ordinator and has a good understanding of children's different needs.

In the main, children behave very well in the setting because the range of activities provided is exciting and stimulating. When a child is upset, staff intervene quickly to provide reassurance and support. However, they are less proactive in dealing with children who disengage themselves from whole-group sessions, such as 'Circle Time'. Staff do not intervene quickly enough to prevent immature behaviour from the youngest children impacting on the group as a whole.

The quality of the partnership with parents and carers is good. Staff have good relationships with parents and the effective work with them contributes to children's good progress. The newly-introduced, parents evening, has been welcomed by parents as a means through which they can access more information about their children's progress. Parents are welcomed into the setting at all times and this promotes confidence in the provision for the children.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. The outdoor area promotes interest and enquiry, such as, looking for garden insects. The setting uses a prayer at the end of the session which encourages children to reflect.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Children's enjoyment and good progress result from good leadership and management of the nursery provision. The quality of the leadership and management are good. The leader and staff are fully qualified and the leader ensures that key workers support their designated children effectively. Staff receive regular training, including child protection, and this promotes children's care and education well. A planned joint training session with the primary school on 'learning to learn' is a good example of the setting's close partnership with the school which benefits children when they move into the Reception year. The setting is organised successfully in terms of resources and accommodation to meet the needs of children.

All required documents and policies are in place or being updated in line with the 'Policies for Early Years Settings'. All relevant information is shared with parents through displays in the entrance lobby and through regular newsletters. Parents are actively encouraged to play a full part in the day-to-day life of the setting and this promotes their involvement and support for children's learning.

The leader, since her appointment, has made significant changes to planning and assessment and in ensuring that key workers have full ownership of new initiatives. There is a clear commitment to improve the provision to support children's learning. Working in close partnership with parents, partner settings and the village school is a key strength of this setting. The introduction of regular reviews of children's progress, together with new scrapbooks for each child, in which photographic and other evidence to show progress will be recorded, is evidence of the leader's commitment to improvement.

Improvements since the last inspection

Immediately following the last inspection the setting implemented the action to keep a written record, signed by parents, of medicines given to children.

The setting was asked to ensure that procedures and records relating to special educational needs, child protection and complaints met requirements. Staff are now aware of the code of practice for children with special educational needs and the setting now has a special educational needs co-ordinator. All confidential records are kept in a secure place. The complaints procedure now includes the details of the regulator. All staff have received recent training in child protection and there is now a designated person.

The setting was asked to improve resources to broaden children's awareness of people's differing backgrounds and to stimulate their imagination. Children now have many more opportunities to express their imagination spontaneously through using a wide range of materials and resources provide good opportunities to promote their awareness of cultures and beliefs.

The setting was asked to work with parents to share information about children's progress. Parents are now better informed about their children's progress towards the early learning goals through plans, reviews, scrapbooks and meetings.

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):

- encourage staff to discuss with children why it is important to eat healthily

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 the outdoor provision to further support children's physical development
- develop staff's knowledge and understanding of when to intervene when children disengage from whole-group activities so that they do not distract the other children and impede their learning.

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