

Acorn Pre School Group

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	132997
Inspection date	19 October 2007
Inspector	Susan June Stone
Setting Address	Paulton Village Hall, Farrington Road, Paulton, Bristol, BS39 7LW
Telephone number	01761 416767 or 01761417688 (home)
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Registered person	The Trustees of Acorn Pre School Group
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Sessional 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?

Acorn Pre-School has been open for over 20 years. It operates from the Village Hall in the rural village of Paulton on the outskirts of Bath. The group has access to the main hall, kitchen, toilets and an enclosed outside play space. A maximum of 26 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open each weekday during school term times. Sessions are from 09.00 to 11.45 and an afternoon session from 12.15 to 14.45.

There are currently 30 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 24 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the local area. The pre-school supports children with language and learning difficulties.

There are seven members of staff, most of whom have an early years qualification or are currently attending further training. All staff are suitably qualified for their roles and responsibilities within the group. The setting receives support from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership, local support teacher and the Pre-school Learning Alliance.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are developing an understanding of maintaining their personal hygiene and care. They know they must wash hands before snack and after messy activities and they do this independently. A step is provided so the children can easily reach the taps. They wash their hands at the sink where each child uses clean water and liquid soap. Paper towels are used for drying hands. Staff supervise the children's hand washing before snack to ensure they are washed properly.

Children's individual dietary needs are known to staff and managed effectively. The children are provided with a snack each day which usually consists of variety of fresh and dried fruit, a savoury biscuit or breadstick. The children enjoy the social occasion of snack time, where they sit in groups to the table and happily converse with each other. They have milk or fruit squash to drink. Additional drinks of water are available for the children to help themselves to during the session. They can help themselves from the jug available, helping them to independently respond to their own needs.

The daily routine allows the children to experience physical play both indoors and out. The children occasionally use the outdoor area, mainly in the summer months. They use part of the hall for physical free play, rather than structured physical play. During these times the children bounce on the mini trampoline and play with balls of different size and shape. Some children play together with the ball, throwing, kicking and bouncing them to each other.

Staff have a good knowledge of first aid. They ensure that their first aid certificates remain current, thus allowing for children's needs to be effectively dealt with in an emergency situation. There is a first aid box available to use, but it has not been identified that some of the contents have reached their expiry date and need to be replaced. A written policy has been devised by the group with regards to the exclusion of children who are ill or infectious. This means staff act in the best interest of the children if they are poorly and protect others from such illnesses or infections.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Space available is used effectively to provide a welcoming environment for children and parents. The indoor play space is organised suitably well to create a child friendly environment which enables the children to experience a variety play opportunities in safe surroundings. Children move around freely and independently to access the different activities provided for them. They choose from the activities set out each day making decisions about their play and learning. There is sufficient, suitable furniture and equipment available to meet the care needs of all children attending, which is appropriate for their ages and stages of development. Children enjoy using the toys available to them, which are clean, safe and suitable to use.

Staff demonstrate an understanding of safety issues. Potential risks to children are minimised because staff check all areas before children arrive to ensure that safety measures are in place. Staff carry out general safety checks each day of the indoor areas, to ensure the environment is safe for the children to use. This helps to ensure that the children can enjoy a variety of play opportunities in generally safe surroundings, which contributes to the children's safety and

wellbeing. There is a high ratio of adults to children present, and the adults are appropriately deployed. This ensures the children are closely supervised while enjoying their play and contributes to the children being cared for in a safe environment. Children learn to be aware of their own safety, for example, staff remind them not to play in the toilet area as they may slip and hurt themselves on the sinks. They are also reminded not to run inside. Staff monitor the arrival and departure of the children effectively, and the door is locked after parents leave, access is then gained by ringing the bell. However, although there are suitably defined procedures for the emergency evacuation of the building, emergency evacuations are not regularly practised. This means that staff and all children are not fully aware of how to evacuate the building in the event of an emergency.

Children's welfare is protected as staff have a suitable understanding in their role of protecting children. Staff are aware of the setting's child protection policy and procedures, making sure the children's welfare is always a priority.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children enjoy the time they spend at the pre-school. They arrive happily and are eager to participate in the activities available. They feel settled and secure in the welcoming environment created by staff. Resources and space are used suitably well to support children's play and provide an appropriate environment for the children. Children select from the activities and resources set out each day, choosing what they want to play with. They enjoy positive interaction from staff, which contributes to their learning and development. Children interact and play happily alongside each other, and are beginning to share and take turns.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff demonstrate a suitable knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum and how children learn. Staff plan and organise a range of activities and play opportunities to encourage children's development. They are suitably involved in the activities provided to help the children to learn and develop at their own pace. Written activity plans indicate that children are offered a range of activities. These plans identify what staff would like the children to learn. However the learning intentions linking to the stepping stones of the Foundation Stage are not consistent on the daily plans to those indicated on the weekly plans. Therefore it is not clear exactly what the children are expected to learn. The activities are also not suitably evaluated to identify children's participation or what children have gained from the experience offered. This means information is not available to inform children's progress folders. Staff do make some notes of observations of the children to record the children's progress and achievements. All children have individual progress folders, however these contain sparse information. Due to the lack of information contained in them, progress folders are not an effective aid to help inform planning, to ensure all children are suitably challenged and individual progress made through the stepping stones. It also means that the progress folders do not give an accurate picture of what stage the children have reached in their individual learning and development.

Children are confident to attend the playschool and they understand the daily routine. They are developing personal independence. They choose from the activities on offer each day. Children respond well to the praise and encouragement from staff. They sit quietly as appropriate, such as at story time when they sit sensibly and listen to the story. They are

developing good relationships with each other, they share resources and wait their turn, such as when using the trampoline.

Children are confident to initiate conversations with adults and peers. They happily converse about different events such as siblings starting 'big school'. Some of the children can recognise their names. They find their name cards that identify their place at the tables for snack. They access books as part of their free play and ask adults to read to them. Regular opportunities are provided for mark making like the drawing and writing table which helps children develop the skills needed for writing. They also develop these skills when using the chalk boards and white boards, where they make large and small movements to draw and write.

Children develop an understanding of numbers and counting through planned and free play activities. They regularly count how many children are present. Children also count how many dots they have drawn on their ladybird pictures. They are developing an understanding of simple calculation through number songs and rhymes like 'five currant buns in a bakers shop'.

Through topic work and themes, children are learning about different festivals, cultures and beliefs. They are learning to value and respect the views and beliefs of others. They are developing their computer skills when they use the laptop computer.

Children enjoy creative activities like role-play, painting and crafts. They use their imagination well in role-play and games, creating different scenarios. A child pretends to be an 'angel', while another pretends to be 'mummy' making the meals. The children enjoy singing songs and rhymes and are able to match movements to the words.

The children show good control and coordination of their movements and a growing awareness of space. They are respectful to each other's space when playing with the balls during their free play physical play session. They move around the setting with confidence successfully negotiate space. They use a variety of tools and equipment with increasing control and dexterity, such as rolling pins and cutters when playing with the play dough, and glue spreaders during craft activities.

Overall, the children are making satisfactory progress in all areas of learning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are building good relationships with staff and peers and are confident and settled within the pre-school. Some of the children wear the setting's named sweatshirt as uniform which helps them to develop a sense of belonging and feel part of the group. The children are familiar with the daily routines. They help to tidy away the toys and wait to wash hands before snack. Children know the levels of expected behaviour, and are generally well behaved. They are aware of the realistic boundaries that have been set. They mostly sit quietly when appropriate, such as register time and story time. Staff use praise and encouragement and are positive role models for the children. The children respond well when offered a sticker for helping to tidy away the toys. A child shows theirs to adults, telling them why they had received it.

Through planned activities the children are offered opportunities to learn about themselves, each other and the wider world around them. Children celebrate a variety of festivals and have access to resources which help to promote positive attitudes to diversity. The children's spiritual,

moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Staff ensure that all children are treated with equal regard and their individual needs and beliefs are respected. Children with learning difficulties and disabilities are well supported and their needs are met. The group's Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator has attended relevant training with regards to special needs. The SENCO and pre-school supervisor closely liaises with parents and other professionals to ensure the children's individual care needs are addressed and met.

Partnership with parents is satisfactory. Staff are available to talk with parents each day which helps to contribute to the consistency in the children's care and well-being. Parents are able to access their children's details and progress folders at any time. Children's progress records are shared with parents. However, these are still in the process of being developed and are not informative enough to give parents an accurate report of their children's progress. Children's activities and achievements are shared with parents at the end of each session as they talk with staff when they collect their children. Information about the provision is also shared with parents through newsletters, the notice board, and the group prospectus.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children's care is appropriately supported. Staff have appropriate experience and knowledge of childcare and are suitably qualified for their roles and responsibilities within the setting. The daily sessions are organised by the pre-school supervisor and staff who work together to provide a welcoming environment for the children. The children benefit from a well organised environment with a balance of free play and adult led planned activities. They experience a variety of different play opportunities which support their development and learning and which enable them to play and explore freely. Staff are deployed well within the setting, so children receive appropriate adult attention, and this helps to ensure the sessions run smoothly.

The leadership and management of the setting are satisfactory. The playschool is managed by a committee of parent volunteers. Good relationships have been developed between the current chairperson and pre-school staff. They work together to ensure effective systems are in place to provide for the needs of the children attending. There is a written operational plan which is regularly reviewed and updated to ensure the required documentation to support the running of the group is in place. This helps to ensure the outcomes for children are suitably promoted and helps to contribute to children's health and wellbeing. All documentation is in place and most is suitably stored to ensure confidentiality. However, some records, such as existing injuries, have multiple entries on one page. Which means information is easily accessible to others. The staff and committee regularly meet and discuss the pre-school and how they can make improvements. However, there is no effective system in place to monitor and evaluate the provision of care, nursery education and the outcomes for children.

Overall, the pre-school meets the needs of the range of children who attend.

Improvements since the last inspection

There were three recommendations from the last care inspection which were to; review the operational plan to show how procedures meet the National Standards and make available to parents, to make sure that written permission is obtained from parents before agreeing to administer medication to children and to update child protection policy to include a procedure to follow if an allegation is made against a member of staff, a student or volunteer. The child protection policy has been reviewed and updated and now contains all the required information

required by Ofsted. Procedures have also been reviewed with regards to the administration of medication. Systems are now in place to ensure that written permission is gained from parents before any medication is given to parents. The operational plan has also been reviewed and updated to ensure it reflects how the National Standards are being met. The operational plan now accurately reflects and supports the running of the group.

There were also three recommendations from the Nursery Education inspection which were firstly to; involve keyworkers in planning of appropriate activities to address specific areas of development. Make sure that plans are based on staff's knowledge of what children need to learn next, secondly to; regularly monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the educational programme and identify strengths and weaknesses of the provision overall, and thirdly to develop strategies to encourage parents to be more involved in their children's education.

All staff do contribute ideas for the planning and delivery of activities and adapt activities to suit children's individual needs, however the planning of activities needs to be further developed and remains a recommendation from this inspection. The pre school have completed their self evaluation forms but they have not identified areas for improvement and any planned action for improvement. Parents are encouraged to share their skills and interests with the setting. Parents are also encouraged to be involved by encouraging their children to bring items relating to the topics and themes. Parents are also encouraged to contribute to parent evenings where they can discuss their children's progress and achievements with their child's keyworker.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that require 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 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 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 the contents of the first aid box are regularly checked to ensure they meet recommended guidelines and are suitable to use
- make sure that emergency evacuation procedures are regularly practised
- ensure all information concerning children remains confidential and inaccessible to others

- further develop systems for the monitoring and evaluation of the provision of care, nursery education and outcomes for children, including the monitoring of children's participation in the activities provided (also applies to Nursery Education)

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 children's progress records to ensure evidence of achievements is suitably recorded; use children's progress records as an aid to inform planning, to ensure children are suitably challenged and moved through the stepping stones of the Foundation Stage and individual needs are met
- further develop written activity plans to clearly identify learning intentions of each structured activity, make sure that activities are evaluated against learning objectives to identify if learning intentions have or have not been met.

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