

Charlton Acorns Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	133720
Inspection date	28 November 2007
Inspector	Caroline Hearn
Setting Address	Charlton Village Road, Charlton, Wantage, Oxfordshire, OX12 7HG
Telephone number	01235 224 088
E-mail	
Registered person	The Trustees of Charlton Acorns
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 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?

Charlton Acorns Pre-school is a committee run group and it originally opened in 1968. It operates from its own building in the grounds of Charlton Primary School, on the outskirts of Wantage. A maximum of 24 children may attend the group at any one time. The group opens five days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 09:00 to 11:45 and from 12:45 to 15:30. Children have access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 35 children aged from three to under five years on roll. Of these, 27 children receive funding for early education. Children come from a wide catchment area.

The group employs six members of staff. Of these, five hold appropriate early years qualifications and one is working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are encouraged to wash their hands before snack time and after using the toilet. They understand the reasons for these simple effective routines and comment that they are washing off the germs. Children are well protected from the spread of infection. Good procedures are in place to support this such as each child having their own hand towel and staff encouraging them to put their hands over their mouths when coughing. Children receive appropriate treatment for any minor accidents as most of the staff have current first aid certificates and know how to put this knowledge into practice.

Children are provided with a balanced healthy snack. These are varied each day and include fresh fruit or vegetables. Children with allergies have these recorded and staff have good access to this information to ensure children are always offered appropriate snacks or drinks. Children are offered a drink at snack time and can request further drinks at any time during the session.

During fine weather children enjoy opportunities for outside play using the pre-school's bikes and tricycles. The pre-school also has an appropriate range of suitable indoor equipment which they use during wet weather such as slides and climbing frames. On these they develop their coordination, climbing, jumping and balancing skills. Children are able to handle tools, objects, construction and malleable materials safely and with increasing control.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are made to feel welcome as the staff make time to greet them individually as they arrive. Due to this the children come in to the group enthusiastically and are keen to start the activities for the day. Their art work is creatively displayed all around the room. Showing that staff value their efforts. Children have good access to a wide range of high quality equipment which is clearly displayed and at their height. All of the toys and resource boxes are clearly labelled to help children know where everything goes. Children treat the resources with respect and carefully tidy them away at the end of the session.

Children safety is well thought through at all times. Staff constantly consider their surroundings and make any changes such as moving play equipment placed on the floor by the children in walkways. Risk assessments are recorded and acted upon. Children are kept safe when out as the staff use simple safety measurers, such as walking in a line holding a rope when going through the school grounds to use their play areas. Children are aware of what to do in an emergency as the staff regularly practise the drill for this with them. Staff do not however record all of the information which is required by the fire officer following these practices.

Children are safeguarded as all staff have undertaken appropriate training. They clearly understand how to put it into practice to ensure the children's wellbeing.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children know the routines of the group well. They come in and separate with relative ease from their parent's and carer's. They know where to hang their coats and the process for self

registration. Children move freely between activities and staff are very observant as to when children are happy to play on their own and when they may require support.

Nursery education

The quality of the teaching and learning is good. Children make good progress towards the early learning goals of the Foundation Stage. The planning is closely monitored and fully evaluated. It effectively covers all of the six areas of learning to ensure children develop quickly across these. Children make good progress towards the early learning goals of the Foundation Stage. The planning is closely monitored and fully evaluated. It effectively covers all of the six areas of learning to ensure children develop quickly across these. Children do undertake some outside learning, however, this does not happen regularly. Clear development records are maintained for all children making it easy to plot each child's stage of development.

Children have many opportunities to use counting and other basic maths skills in everyday situations. The staff ask the children to count how many blocks they may have or how many children are playing at the sand tray. Their knowledge of the children allows them to tailor these questions and ask older more able children, "how many children would there be if some children moved away from the sand?" This ensures all children are offered activities to extend their existing knowledge base.

Children are developing a good understanding of the wider world. When children freely select books about trains and take these to staff together they discuss the different trains you get such as underground trains in London. They look at working trains and cable cars and in which countries you find these. Staff are skilled at extending these impromptu activities and may then go and get the globe out to look for some of the countries which they had been talking about. In addition to learning about the wider world, these simple activities ensure children develop an excellent understanding of the knowledge they can gain from books. Children are clearly aware that print carries meaning. Some older more able children are able to confidently read both their name and the names of some of their friends. To develop these skills staff encourage all children to write their names on their art work. Very young children may just mark make and the older more able children write their full names.

Staff make effective use of props to teach children such as during story time the staff use items such as a scarecrow puppet. They tell the children that the scarecrow doesn't know how to sit nicely for story time and ask the children to show him how to do it. Even very young children then take pride in showing their sitting and listening skills. Children have lots of good opportunities to undertake a wide range of art and craft activities. They learn about mixing colours or painting with bubble mixture. Their work is prominently displayed around the room and the children take pride in pointing out their efforts.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's individual needs are very well met. Staff clearly take time to find out about each child and their family. This knowledge ensures that they understand how children are feeling when they come in to the group, such as a child who may have had a poor night sleep and is a bit tired. They can then respond to this child in the appropriate way and allow him to sit and enjoy some quiet time. Children with special educational needs have these well met as staff undertake appropriate additional training and are clearly aware of how to implement this effectively.

Children learn to negotiate and resolve small disputes by themselves. They are supported in this by the staff who intervene if this does not work. Staff encourage them to consider how their behaviour is making others feel or give them ideas as to how they can resolve these disputes. The staff use lots of praise and children are offered a star for being helpful. When these are handed out staff explain to the children what the child receiving this has done. Explanations include information such as she helped even though she didn't make all of the mess. Children understand these clear messages and are keen to obtain a star so behaviour at the pre-school is good.

Children's, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children are taught about different cultures, right/wrong and discuss how others would feel in different situations.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents state that they have regular opportunities to discuss their children's educational progress. They are always presented with a clear picture of their children's level of attainment. Parents also note that they are regularly given information about current topic work so they can continue this at home with the children should they wish. This level of information exchange ensures the children receive good continuity of care between home and the pre-school.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The quality of the leadership and management of nursery education is good. The staff are committed to developing their existing childcare knowledge and they regularly attend relevant training. This develops their existing good practice which in turn raises the standard of childcare and education. The staff are well supported by the highly proactive committee. Committee members have undertaken training related to their roles such as understanding their duty in relation to Ofsted and the National Standards. This ensures they are able to work with the staff in delivering positive outcomes for children.

Children receive high levels of one to one support due to the careful deployment of staff.

Children's hours of attendance are recorded in several different books so it is not always easy to gain a clear picture of these. All other documents relating to the children are comprehensive and contain all of the required information. The policies and procedures are very much working documents. The committee and staff regularly review these to ensure they continue to be relevant to the children and staff. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Following their last care inspection the group was set one recommendation. This was to, ensure that all children are able to dry their hands hygienically. Each child brings in his/her own towel at the start of each session and hangs this on their designated peg. Children who forget are provided with paper towels or a spare towel. This ensures they are able to dry their hands hygienically and reduces the possible spread of infection.

Following their last inspection of nursery education the group was set two recommendations. Firstly they were asked to develop existing systems of evaluation to inform future planning for children's next stage of learning. The staff work together to develop the planning and ensure that each child has any developmental needs addressed within this. This ensures children are

offered activities tailored to their developmental needs. The second recommendation was for the group to provide more opportunities to extend older more able children's learning in mathematics through both planned and everyday activities. Mathematics underpins all activities. The staff ask the children to count how many blocks they may have or how many children are playing at the sand tray. Their knowledge of the children allows them to tailor these questions and ask older more able children, what would happen if some children left the sand tray? How many children would be left? This ensures all children are offered activities to extend their existing knowledge base.

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.

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):

- ensure the emergency evacuation practice records contain all the information required by the Fire Safety Officer
- ensure children's hours of attendance are clearly 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):

- further develop opportunities for outside 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