

# Acorn Pre-School Committee

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	253622
<b>Inspection date</b>	05 December 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Pauline Margaret Todd
<b>Setting Address</b>	The Portacabin, Whaplode CE Primary School, Mill Lane, Whaplode, Lincolnshire, PE12 6TS
<b>Telephone number</b>	01406 373400
<b>E-mail</b>	
<b>Registered person</b>	Acorn Pre-School
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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](http://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?

Acorn Pre-school is well established. It is managed by a committee and has charitable status. It operates from a mobile unit in the grounds of Whaplode Church of England Primary School in the rural village of Whaplode, Lincolnshire. A maximum of 20 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. It is open each weekday from 09:00 and 11:30 and 12.30 to 15:00 during term time. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 40 children aged from two-and-a-half to five years on roll. Of these 26 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the local catchment area. The setting supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The pre-school employs five staff. Four of the staff, including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications. The manager is working towards a higher qualification.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

Children's health is promoted well. The pre-school takes effective steps to prevent the spread of infection. Children have independent access to the bathroom and willingly take responsibility for meeting their own personal care needs. They confidently use the toilet and thoroughly wash their hands afterwards and before eating snacks.

Children's health details and medical requirements are clearly recorded to maintain their good health. Staff follow effective systems which enable children who are unwell to be cared for appropriately. Sufficient staff have current first aid knowledge to ensure children's well-being in the event of an accident.

Children are appropriately nourished. They eat snacks of fruit and vegetables which help them to learn about healthy eating. Children with special dietary requirements and allergies have their needs met appropriately because the parents have provided the setting with detailed information. Children help themselves to water from a dispenser. They have further drinks at snack times to make sure they drink sufficient amounts to keep them healthy.

Children are encouraged to adopt a healthy lifestyle. They have a positive attitude to exercise and enjoy going outside to play. They practice running and riding bikes, avoiding obstacles and controlling their speed. They climb confidently to access the slide. Children use buggies and prams to push and pull when taking their dolls for a walk. They use malleable materials, for example, play dough with and without tools. They are developing competent manipulative skills by using scissors to cut paper. Children are able to fulfil their own needs with regard to rest and relaxation and use comfortable cushions by the book corner during the session.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is good.

Children benefit from being cared for in premises that are safe, secure and suitable to meet their needs. They are helped to feel comfortable and at ease by seeing colourful displays of their work on the walls. Staff make creative use of the space available with separate areas for table top activities and role play. Children can comfortably take part in small scale play on a carpet on the floor.

Children use a range of developmentally appropriate resources. These are stored in low cupboards and containers. However, children are not encouraged to access items for themselves to develop self-selection and independence. The resources they use are provided by staff which are then tidied away at large group times. Children use suitably sized tables and chairs which enable them to undertake activities and eat together.

Children are kept safe because the pre-school uses detailed risk assessments and daily checklists for indoors and outside to reduce potential hazards and minimise risks. Procedures for fire safety are simple and clear and staff have a good understanding of their responsibilities and roles in the event of a fire. Fire drills are practised regularly to keep children safe.

Children are suitably protected because the staff have a sound working knowledge of their child protection policy. They would be able to put appropriate procedures into practice if they suspect that a child is being abused or neglected.

## **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is good.

Children's welfare is promoted successfully. They are provided with a wide range of activities and play opportunities that develop their emotional, social and intellectual capabilities. They are happy and well-settled. Staff give reassurance, encouragement and praise. They talk and listen to the children and are interested in what they are doing. They maintain good eye contact. They position themselves at the children's level to support them with their activities, for example, construction, puzzles, cutting and sticking.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The staff are enthusiastic about learning and make the activities fun for the children. They are helping children to learn new skills, for example, to use scissors to cut paper, how to blow bubbles. They have a secure knowledge of the Foundation Stage and deliver a curriculum that fully covers all the areas of learning. They give sufficient time and opportunities for speaking, listening, reading and writing. They use some language to further children's thinking, although, many closed questions are asked. For example, what shape are these? what colour is this? which does not help to develop children's vocabulary or understanding. Staff use planning to identify the purpose of the activities. Ongoing observations are made of the children and the information is transferred to their assessment record. However, the information is not used to guide planning to help children move to the next stage in their learning. The staff work directly with the children at all times and provide an inviting, friendly environment in which to learn. A calm, relaxed atmosphere is created.

Children have regular opportunities to talk about their home and community through discussions during the sessions. They concentrate well at activities and listen intently to stories. The posters displayed around the room encourage them to share how they are feeling. Children are not able to initiate their own activities or operate independently. Most activities are adult led, for example, craft, compare bears, 'small world' play. Large group times are held during the session for discussion, tidying up, stories and snacks.

Children interact readily with others. They say, 'look what I made'. They listen to each other when discussing holidays. They use language in imaginative play. They tell each other, 'this is the friendly dinosaur'. They are becoming aware of the sounds in their names. They are learning the purpose of writing. There are notebooks in the role play area, and pencils and crayons for mark making. They recognise familiar words, for example, the days of the week, their own names. More-able children attempt to write their names on their work. Children undertake a wide variety of enjoyable, practical activities which develops their understanding of mathematics. They sing number rhymes which involve counting up and down. Children count confidently, for example, 'the eleven children present' or 'the three fishes'. They know when they have the same number or different numbers when comparing groups of bears. They use mathematical language, for example, they discuss shape and size when making circles with the tractor, they say their small chicken is called 'little un'.

Children have ongoing opportunities to investigate, for example, snails, stick insects, cooking activities. They discover how things work by using magnifying glasses and egg timers. They experience cutting and joining and use everyday technology. They see photographs which remind them of past events, for example, their trip to the local Indian restaurant. Children explore different materials. They mix glitter with the playdough and use feathers for collages.

Music times are held regularly. Children are learning nursery rhymes and Christmas songs in preparation for their concert. They use their imagination well during role play activities.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is good.

Children have high self-esteem and confidence because the staff give them lots of praise, for example, for finding all the squares, for knowing their colours. The pre-school liaises well with parents to ensure that children's records contain sufficient information to enable appropriate care to be given. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are warmly welcomed into the setting and given suitable support to promote their welfare and development. Children are helped to develop a positive attitude to others by using play equipment which reflects positive images of race and culture and celebrating festivals. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of children is fostered. They play together cooperatively and share the play equipment, for example, construction pieces and cutters with the playdough. They are polite and well-mannered. They say 'yes please', 'thank you' and 'excuse me'. They have some planned opportunities to learn about themselves and the local community, for example, they make trips to the library, farms and churches.

Children's well-being is promoted because of the positive relationships which have developed between staff and their parents. There is a useful exchange of information and parents are welcome to stay until they feel their child is settled. They state they find the staff very friendly and approachable. There is an informative notice board in the entrance lobby. Parents can help themselves to leaflets. A copy of the pre-school's policies and procedures is displayed. Parents have sufficient information about the procedures for making complaints and the process for resolving them. They are involved in the running of the group by serving on a management committee.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents gain ongoing information about the early learning goals through displays of children's work and newsletters sent out by staff. They receive sufficient written information about the Foundation Stage and the different areas of learning in the prospectus. They are well informed about their child's progress. They have daily discussions with staff. They have formal opportunities at parents' evenings to look at their child's record of achievement. They feel involved in their child's learning. The supervisor sends home notes regarding themes, projects and activities being undertaken and asks for items to be brought in.

### **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

The organisation of the setting ensures that children are well cared for by staff who are suitable to meet their needs. There are effective arrangements to make sure children are not left alone with anyone who has not been vetted. The staff and volunteers are able to work together well to promote children's welfare and learning. Appraisals are regularly undertaken for all staff to make sure they are given sufficient opportunities to improve their skills and identify their training and development needs.

The pre-school's operational plan shows how staff, space and resources are used to meet children's needs. There is an effective key worker system in place to help children to settle in and ensure continuity of care. An efficient registration system is used with staff signing children in and out. Documents and records are readily available. Policies and procedures are regularly

reviewed to make sure they meet with current guidance and practices. Children's and staff's details are stored confidentially.

The leadership and management is good. The supervisor, chairperson and committee members are very committed to the improvement of care and education for all children. The staff team are aware of their roles and responsibilities. They meet together regularly to plan and discuss the provision. They are aware of children's starting points and work well with parents to help children achieve their potential. The setting has a system for monitoring and evaluating their provision and a vision for the future. Overall children's needs are met.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last care inspection, the pre-school agreed to review their equal opportunities and special needs policies. The setting has worked hard to make sure their policy document complies with current guidance. Procedures are effectively implemented to promote all outcomes for children.

There was one key issue arising from the last nursery education inspection. This was to provide children with more opportunities to be creative during art and music. The pre-school has continued to improve the quality of the educational provision to help children make good progress. The children require further opportunities to initiate their own activities which will allow them to use their skills imaginatively in their own way so they can develop their creativity in all areas of 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:

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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):

- improve children's access to resources to encourage further self-selection and independence.

## **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):

- encourage the children to operate independently and initiate their own activities
- use assessments to guide planning to help children move to the next stage in their learning and develop the use of questioning to further children's thinking.

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)