

Acorns

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	219945
Inspection date	12 March 2008
Inspector	Susan Marriott
Setting Address	The Grange School, Staverton Road, Daventry, Northamptonshire, NN11 4HW
Telephone number	01327 705785
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Registered person	Daventry Grange Care Club
Type of inspection	Childcare
Type of care	Out of School 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

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.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Acorns Childcare was registered in 1991 and operates from Daventry Grange School, in Daventry. The setting uses the refurbished caretaker's bungalow with integral toilet and kitchen facilities and a classroom in the Key Stage 1 unit. The setting has access to the bungalow garden, school playground and the school hall. A maximum of 38 children may attend the group at any one time. The setting is open from 07.30 to 08.40 and after school from 15.15 to 18.00, during term time and from 08.00 till 18.00 each school holiday, excluding the Christmas holiday.

There are currently 67 children from three years to under 11 years on roll. The children who attend come from a wide catchment area within and outside the county. The group supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also supports a number of children who speak English as a second language.

The setting employs six staff who all work in the school during the day. Of these, three hold appropriate early years qualifications. The manager does not yet hold an appropriate level 3 qualification. The play scheme receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children stay healthy because they begin to learn the importance of good hygiene and personal care through the consistent daily routines. Staff encourage them to follow clear procedures to prevent the spread of infection. For example, children wash their hands before snack time and dispose of any rubbish into the waste bin afterwards. Staff wipe tables with anti-bacterial spray before serving snack to minimise cross-contamination.

Children receive appropriate treatment in the case of medical emergency because all staff members retain a suitable qualification in first aid. The first aid box is generously stocked and the manager regularly checks the contents as part of her robust risk assessments. There are clear and effective procedures for recording accidents and medication. Sick children are excluded from the club to prevent the spread of infection. Children of all ages are able to rest according to their needs at the end of the day. Younger children can use the book corner in the classroom and older children can complete homework or sit quietly in the 'Star light room'.

Children can choose to play inside or outside and staff readily respond to their requests. Children play in the bungalow garden and the school playground with a wide range of recreational equipment. Some may choose to participate in more organised team games. These activities help children to run off any surplus energy, to develop their self-confidence and contribute to their good health and physical development.

Children are provided with sufficient food for their needs without spoiling their appetite for a meal when they get home. The staff work hard to take account of children's requests and provide a varied range of snacks that appeal to the children and meet their dietary needs.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are very safe, secure and confident in the warm and welcoming club environment. The bungalow base is particularly inviting as it provides a domestic style environment which is tastefully fitted out with home style furniture and children's art work on the walls. Staff make excellent use of the space available and group types of activity in each of the three rooms. The children have chosen names for the rooms. For example, the craft room is the 'Super cool room'; the 'Starlight room' is used for homework, books and quiet activities. The 'Room of changes' has the television, sofas and a table and chairs. Older children are cared for in the immaculately clean environment of the former caretaker's bungalow. However, younger children are accommodated for the first part of the evening session in the reception classroom areas where toilets have not been appropriately cleaned at the end of the school day.

Staff have identified and minimised risks on the premises for children. For example, socket covers are in place and staff carry out and record a daily premises check. Fire drill practice is sufficiently frequent and there is regular monitoring of the accident book and incident records. Children are closely supervised as they play and are reminded of safety boundaries such as not running inside.

Children use an excellent range of safe play resources which are age-appropriate. Resources are set out for children each day and additional items accessed for children on request. A

separate, quieter room is always available and this means that children may rest and relax or play quietly after their day at school. Staff have a clear understanding of the procedures to follow if they have concerns relating to child protection and some staff members have attended child protection training. This ensures that children's welfare is appropriately safeguarded.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are enthusiastic and comfortable within the friendly and welcoming environment of the setting. They know the daily routine well and this helps to make them feel confident and secure. For example, they know to hang up their coats and put their bags into the cloak cupboards before choosing where to play. Younger children confidently approach the inspector and proudly show their soft toys. Children spend their time purposefully. They relate well to each other and enjoy the company of other children and staff. There is a varied range of resources and activities which are used effectively to interest children and develop their learning. Older children take part in organised games, races, football and enjoy quieter activities such as quizzes, reading, board games, construction, cookery, needlework and a wide range of crafts.

Younger children participate in a broad range of play activities. For example, they enjoy the opportunity to paint observational pictures of daffodils, carnations and a potted begonia plant. They explore orange play dough, use the classroom computers and play simple group games with staff. Plans of activities and play opportunities offered to the children demonstrate the wide range on offer. Children are very well supported by the staff who take an active role in their sessions at the club and encourage them to extend their experiences by listening and talking to them. Children's concentration is good, they stay focused on their chosen activities and respond excitedly to the challenges set. They happily participate in quizzes, puzzles and brain teaser games and enjoy the competition with other children of all ages.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children enjoy mutually respectful relationships with the staff and each other. They develop self-esteem and confidence as they voice their opinions and make choices and decisions. Children readily chatter to the staff whilst they play and staff always make time to listen to groups or individuals. Children can put forward their ideas for activities and snacks through written or verbal contributions. Staff plan activities to promote a positive view of the wider society and increase children's awareness of diversity and their understanding of others. For example, themed monthly activities for Easter currently include a spring collage display, planting seeds and making Easter baskets.

Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities integrate well within the group and staff provide sensitive support when required. Equipment and resources are adapted to ensure all children are able to participate fully. All children respect and understand that some children need extra help and willingly support those who do. Children show care and concern for each other and play together harmoniously.

Children generally behave well. They know what is expected of them because they discuss and help to write the club's safety and behaviour rules. Staff talk to the children regularly to ensure they understand the behaviour boundaries.

Relationships with parents are friendly and promote the continuity of care and children's sense of security. Daily dialogue with parents ensures that most day to day information is shared appropriately. General information and monthly plans are shared with parents and carers via newsletters and club pages on the school website. A well-presented information table in the entrance hall of the bungalow ensures that many parents have easy access to general notices and information about policies and procedures. However, parents and carers of younger children using the reception classroom do not always access the bungalow and do not have equal access to the information provided.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The manager has not yet achieved an appropriate qualification suitable to the post in line with requirements. Nevertheless, she has a highly competent working knowledge and understanding of the National Standards. The manager is supported by an appropriately qualified staff team. The school has chosen to prioritise continuity of care for the children and all staff working in the club also work in various roles within the school during the academic day. This means that they know the children well and are able to ensure that the school ethos, policies and procedures are consistently implemented across the provision. This secures children's welfare effectively.

Positive outcomes are promoted for children through the increasingly effective organisation of the setting. Self-evaluation and monitoring systems are established to ensure consistent progress towards the highest standards of childcare. The committed and dedicated staff team ensure that children benefit and enjoy their time at this welcoming and friendly provision. Staff respect children's feelings, value their comments and clearly enjoy their company. The children obviously feel at home and at ease in the club environment. This means they are confident to initiate and extend their own play. Planning is essentially flexible and promotes children's care and development.

Children are cared for by staff who have been suitably vetted. Recruitment and induction procedures are suitably robust. Appropriate documentation underpins the successful organisation of the club and helps staff in their day to day work with the children, providing a valuable source of guidance and reference. Registration systems do not always ensure that hours of attendance are recorded for children and staff and this potentially compromises their safety in an emergency situation. The provision has reliable systems to cover for unexpected staff absence throughout the year. This ensures that ratios are always maintained and that children receive consistent levels of adult attention and input to secure their happiness. Overall, children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection of day care, the setting was asked to improve child protection procedures and to develop and implement an action plan that sets out how the manager will achieve an appropriate level 3 qualification. The setting has put a suitable policy into place and has ensured that information about child protection is shared with parents by displaying a flowchart on the notice board for parents. Difficulties with college administration have prevented the manager from completing her qualifications within the planned timescale and the action plan to enable

the manager to achieve a level 3 qualification continues to be implemented by the school. The actions taken continue to improve the quality of care for children.

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

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.

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 that all toilet areas are maintained in a clean and hygienic state
- ensure that all parents and carers have equal access to information about the provision
- continue to implement the action plan that sets out how the manager will complete and achieve an appropriate level 3 qualification. Review the system for registering children and staff attendance on a daily basis showing hours of attendance.

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