

# Little Acorns Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY286027
<b>Inspection date</b>	06 March 2008
<b>Inspector</b>	Coral Hales
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<b>Registered person</b>	Emily Clare Towers
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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](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 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?

Little Acorns Day Nursery opened in 2004 and operates from four rooms in a purpose built modular building situated within the grounds of St Andrews School, Cobham in Surrey. A maximum of 52 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 08.00 to 18.00 for 50 weeks of the year. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 80 children aged from three months to under five years on roll. Of these, 18 children receive funding for early nursery education. The group serves the local community. The nursery currently supports children who speak English as an additional language. There are no children attending with identified learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The nursery employs 14 members of staff. Of these, seven hold appropriate early years qualifications and five are currently on training programmes. The setting receives support from an early learning advisor from the local authority.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

### Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's good health is generally promoted well. They gain a suitable understanding of the importance of cleanliness and personal care as part of everyday routines. Staff explain that children must use soap to wash the germs away and they readily wash their hands at appropriate times. Generally staff follow clear health and hygiene procedures. Although tables are wiped before lunch, some practices are not effective during the meal to encourage children's developing knowledge of appropriate social skills, and fruit is served without the use of plates. Records that support staff to promote children's good health are well maintained including written consent to seek emergency medical treatment or advice and medicine and accident records. Most staff hold an up-to-date first aid qualification and first aid kits are readily accessible throughout the nursery.

Babies are well protected and suitable nappy changing procedures are in place and each child has a tray with individual nappy changing essentials. Staff adhere to good hygiene routines, such as wearing aprons and disposable gloves when changing nappies and the areas used are kept clean and tidy. This ensures that good levels of hygiene are maintained to avoid the spread of infection. Older babies are gradually introduced to simple toileting routines in line with home routines and parental wishes. Children can rest whenever they are tired either in a cot, if appropriate, or on mats with individual bedding. Staff ensure that they regularly check on the children and that they are effectively monitored.

Babies and young children's individual routines are regularly discussed with parents to ensure they are maintained and that any changes to home routines are adopted by staff at the nursery. Their feeding routines are followed as requested. Babies are given bottles and are generally held by staff as they enjoy their milk. Staff plan to ensure that mealtimes are relaxed and babies are encouraged to try soft foods approved by their parents and are given the time to develop their own eating habits.

Children are provided with regular drinks and nutritious snacks of fruit and vegetables. Pre-school children are able to access drinking water at any time. Children are provided with a cooked midday meal, such as chicken and asparagus and fresh fruit. Foods are generally organic and menus are displayed on the notice board to keep parents informed. Dietary needs are noted and displayed in the individual rooms and in the kitchen therefore keeping all staff well informed. Consideration is given to children's dietary needs and staff work closely with parents to provide alternatives. Older children do not have many opportunities to discuss what they are eating or to observe food before it is served out. All meals are prepared in the kitchen and arrive fully plated and therefore children's understanding of a healthy diet is not well promoted. They are encouraged to try new foods and to use cutlery appropriately and correct social skills are generally promoted.

Children have access to a safe and well resourced outside play area and have lots of opportunities to develop their large physical skills as they, for example, if appropriate to their age, use the large climbing frame. Equipment for the younger children is available to support their development and a good selection of sit and ride toys, balls and other equipment is kept in the garden for them. Children are also provided with suitable equipment in their own base rooms, for example, the babies have small slides, rockers and push and ride toys. The older children can take part in musical activities, use the parachute or soft play equipment if they are unable

to access the outdoor area. Babies are taken into the garden in their pushchairs to enjoy being outside in the fresh air watching the others play.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a secure and welcoming environment. Effective entry security systems are in place and all visitors are recorded. The nursery is divided into different areas according to age groups. The outside area is available and this is fully fenced and securely gated.

Overall, positive steps are taken to minimise and prevent accidents. Daily risk assessments are completed, however, these are not fully effective in identifying hazards. Fire procedures are clearly displayed and fire drills are carried out and recorded. Suitable equipment is available to ensure babies are safe including reins, low and high chairs and cots.

Children have access to a good range of equipment and resources that promote their development and maintain their interest well. Babies are provided with a good range of suitable toys and are encouraged to move around to access equipment. Staff ensure toys are cleaned regularly. Toddlers and children up to three years old have three different rooms for their activities. This gives them opportunities to use creative equipment, such as painting and imaginative role play equipment as well as books, puzzles and construction toys. Toys are stored well and enable the older children to be able to self-select to develop their own ideas. The pre-school room is generally well resourced and is divided into several different areas, children in this area are fully independent and can easily access all equipment used to support their learning.

Children are safeguarded by staff and management who have some knowledge of child protection issues and understand their duty of care to those in their care. However, policies are not in line with new guidance issued by the Local Safeguarding Children Board and therefore parents are not fully informed. Not all staff are clear of the correct procedures to follow in an emergency. This has been identified by the owner as an area for development.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Babies and young children are well occupied and settled at the nursery. Staff ensure babies individual routines are followed and they are encouraged to chatter and find their own voices. They are helped to walk and enjoy simple games and to develop their language and personal care skills. They happily pick up toys and explore how they work, for example, a baby sat playing with a balloon throwing it into the air and watching fascinated as it came down again. Staff use the Birth to three framework for guidance when planning and they complete observations that relate to the varying stages of children's development. Some records are not fully up to date. Young children share a story with a member of staff and enjoy joining in and help to identify the pictures. They enjoy playing with, for example, water filled sensory bottles which contain glittery bits, different colours and oil. They help to create artwork to add to the display on the wall, for example, the large bus. In another room they listen to music, complete inset puzzles and develop their imagination in the role-play area. They have opportunities to observe the Gerbil and watch as he plays in his cage and then look for him when he is curled up sleeping.

Children of all ages develop independence and self-esteem as they express their ideas during play using a range of toys and resources which attract their interest. Children in all rooms receive friendship, encouragement and support from the caring and conscientious staff team.

## Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff make generally good use of their time to help children to make progress. When staff engage with the children teaching is effective, however, this is not consistent and some activities lack focus and they are not always sufficiently challenged. Routines impact on their learning and children sometimes become distracted and their learning can be limited.

Staff complete records of children's progress, although these are not kept fully up to date to allow current information to be shared. Planning is completed by the room leader and is linked to the six areas of learning, however, they do not clearly show what children are expected to learn. Some focussed activities are evaluated, although these are not used effectively to inform future planning. Activities are generally appropriate for the age and development of the children in the pre-school room.

Children have a positive attitude to learning, they ask questions and show interest, for example, they are inquisitive, curious and boldly approach visitors and ask what they are doing and what they are called. They are very interested in the computer being used and are knowledgeable about what it is used for. Children begin to use their initiative and take some responsibility for themselves. They make choices and decisions and begin to concentrate well on chosen tasks. For example, they love to choose books in the school library and share books with their friends or sit quietly on their own looking at the pictures. They enjoy songs and rhymes and listen to the story of 'The Bear Hunt' and join in enthusiastically with familiar parts. Their artistic and creative skills develop well as they create attractive wall displays showing daffodils, lambs and chicks relating to the theme of Spring. Children use the role-play area regularly, however, this area is not effectively promoted to stimulate their interest. They play with small world figures that depict culture and disability and a good variety of suitable posters show positive images to develop children's understanding of the wider world. Displays show they have taken part in Chinese New Year celebrations and this includes children's own artwork.

## Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are forming good relationships with adults and each other and begin to understand respect. They are encouraged to feel good about themselves through sensitive support and guidance from staff. Babies and toddlers show a good sense of belonging, for example, they cuddle into familiar staff, reach out for comfort and settle in their familiar surroundings happily.

Parents appreciate the approachability of the staff and are comfortable to discuss their child. Staff take time to get to know each family. Parents are provided with daily information sheets which give details of their child's care arrangements and progress and achievements of the day. They are generally well informed about the nursery as they receive a brochure and notices and the newsletter details planned activities. The entrance corridors have notice boards with lots of additional information displayed. The nursery takes positive steps to ensure parents are kept informed about relevant policies and procedures and a rigorous and robust complaints system has been introduced and shared with them.

Children learn about themselves and the wider world through purposeful activities linked to their own culture by celebrating festivals, such as Diwali and special occasions, such as Mothers Day. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children's individual needs are identified by staff, however, the current procedures do not record early stages or any informal intervention. The nursery has a named special needs coordinator, she is, however, new to her role. The progress of the children for whom English is a second language is good and they are well supported and fully integrated into nursery life.

Staff support younger children in sharing and turn taking, enabling children to begin to understand how to behave. Older children are aware of the boundaries when they are at the nursery and staff manage their behaviour effectively and children behave well. Appropriate strategies, according to the age and stage of development, help all children understand right from wrong.

The partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Staff greet parents and children on arrival to help them to feel welcome. They are provided with information relating to planned activities but have minimal information about the Foundation Stage Curriculum. The nursery have had one planned parents' evening, however, this was not well attended. Parents have access to the children's records at any time, however, not all are effectively maintained.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in an organised environment. Resources and equipment are arranged according to age groups and areas of learning. Registers of children's attendance are accurate and state times of arrival and departure. Attractive displays of children's artwork and colourful posters create a child-friendly environment where they feel welcome. Overall space is used effectively and enables children to move around freely as they participate in a wide range of activities. Suitable use of the outside area allows them to explore and investigate and extends their play and learning experiences. Organisation of the day is generally effective although in some areas routines impact on children's learning. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Leadership and management is satisfactory. There have been change to the senior staffing and the roles of responsibility over the recent months, and Ofsted was not kept informed. The manager and staff work well as a team as some have worked together since the nursery opened. There are clear recruitment and induction procedures in place and this ensures staff are appropriately qualified, experienced and suitable to have regular contact with young children. Team meetings keep staff informed and appraisals clearly identify their training and development needs and they are well supported in their roles. Children benefit from the management teams commitment to staff training and development, for example, some staff are currently working towards additional higher qualifications.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last inspection the nursery was asked to continue to develop planning and observations to ensure children's next steps were identified. Some progress has been made, however, this will form part of a recommendation following this inspection. They have implemented a key-worker system and this is satisfactory and information is shared with individual parents to keep them informed.

Two recommendations related to documentation, a daily register is now in place and completed as required. A risk assessment is in place, however this is not fully effective and will be continued as a recommendation following this inspection. Staff were asked to ensure drinking water was available at all times, this is now in place and ensures children remain well hydrated.

### **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 written record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints records 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):

- develop staffs knowledge and understanding of the guidance issued by the Local Safeguarding Children Board and ensure they are able to carry out the procedures effectively
- develop the procedures used to identify children who have additional needs
- ensure that a full risk assessment is completed and regularly reviewed, when there is a significant change including time scales to minimise identified risks
- ensure children's understanding of a healthy diet and lifestyle is effectively promoted throughout the day and that babies are held whilst bottle feeding, preferably by the same carer
- ensure that Ofsted is notified of changes and significant events

#### **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 the planning to clearly show what the children are intended to learn and use evaluations to note if the learning intentions have been met. Ensure observations are regularly maintained to allow the information gained to be used effectively to support children's progress and development.

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)