

Acorns Pre-School (Cockington)

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY278160
Inspection date	18 March 2008
Inspector	Jacqueline Allen
Setting Address	Cockington Primary School, Old Mill Road, Torquay, Devon, TQ2 6AP
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Registered person	Deborah Stephens
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day 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 AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are outstanding. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are outstanding.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Acorns Pre-school (Cockington) was originally registered in 1999 and was owned and run by the present owner as part of a partnership. She became the sole owner, and therefore re-registered the pre-school, in 2004. The pre-school is situated in a pre-fabricated temporary classroom in the grounds of Cockington Primary School. The out-of-school club has the additional use of the school hall, playgrounds and associated facilities.

A maximum of 20 children under eight years may attend at any one time. There are currently 36 children on roll with the pre-school who all receive funded education and an additional 70 children registered with the before and after school club. The setting is open Monday to Friday from 08:00 to 18:00 for 50 weeks of the year. The pre-school operates from 08:45 to 15:00 term-time only. It offers two funded nursery education sessions per day, with the option of children staying over the lunch period. Out-of-school care is offered from 08:00 to 08:45 and 15:00 until 18:00 during term-time and from 08:00 until 18:00 during school holidays. Priority for places for out of school care go to children attending Cockington Primary School or Acorns Pre-school. The setting supports children with learning difficulties and English as an additional language.

There are currently six members of staff, of whom five hold a Level 3 qualification in early years or above. Additional members of staff are available for emergency cover. The pre-school is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children's health and well-being are given the highest priority by all of the diligent staff. Children's accidents are appropriately treated and recorded by staff, who all hold valid first aid certificates. Parents give their prior consent for the staff to seek emergency medical treatment, if required, and excellent systems are used to ensure children's medication needs are well documented. Children routinely wash their hands before eating and after toileting, which is effectively monitored and encouraged through the staff's good role modelling. Children access tissues independently and dispose of them hygienically. Staff follow stringent written nappy changing procedures and share a comprehensive sick child policy with parents to reduce the risk of cross infection. Information on infectious diseases is available and staff follow a written procedure for preparing food which benefits children's health. In addition, staff use the 'Safer food, better business' pack to record their ongoing cleaning schedules. A comprehensive sun protection policy ensures children's welfare is extremely well considered.

Children's healthy eating is actively encouraged through effective partnerships with parents and the variety of healthy snacks provided by the group, such as fresh and dried fruits, raw vegetables, cereal, toast, muffins, crumpets and sandwiches. There is a comprehensive food and drink policy with additional guidelines for children's packed lunches which promotes healthy eating. Children help themselves from the range of snacks available and are praised on their healthy choices. Children pour themselves a drink of water as required and choose between milk, water and squash at snack time. Their individual dietary needs are well known by staff who have collated these on a list for ease of reference.

Children experience daily opportunities to enjoy physical exercise both indoors and outside. They confidently use a range of wheeled resources, such as scooters and bikes to negotiate the surrounding space and use large play equipment to practice their skills in climbing up and sliding down. Indoors, children move in a variety of ways, to music and through following instructions on action tapes. Children spend lots of time outside in the fresh air with after school children enjoying use of the school grounds to vary and challenge their physical abilities. They benefit from lots of good space to run around and practice their ball skills.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children greatly benefit from the well organised play spaces, where they play in a clean and welcoming environment. There are bright, interesting displays of children's work which make them feel part of the group. Children freely and safely access resources which are laid out on low-level tables or on the floor. However, children self select from all resources, confidently getting out what they would like to play with from low-level storage units. Staff ensure there is a wide range of interesting resources available for inside and outside play, which benefits children's interest and self selection.

Children are extremely safe as the staff have an excellent knowledge of potential risks to children and take the appropriate actions to reduce these promptly. Daily recorded checks are meaningful and in depth, with any issues immediately resolved and written risk assessments showing staff's very good knowledge gained from training. Children regularly practice the emergency evacuation procedures to ensure they know how to leave the building safely and staff clearly record these fire drills, which also sometimes take place with the school. Children's safety is given the utmost priority by confident staff who deploy themselves effectively to ensure the premises are secure, to prevent children leaving unsupervised and uninvited visitors gaining access. Children sit down at arrival and departure times, with one member of staff monitoring the door at all times. Staff are vigilant at ensuring that children leave with authorised carers only, with clear written procedures to follow. Visitors are routinely recorded and staff hand out guidance sheets to ensure children's safety is not compromised. Children gain an awareness of managing potential risks through ongoing discussions with staff, who continually make them aware of possible consequences. Staff ensure that they are always in contact with each other, by using walkie-talkies, when some children and staff are outside using the school grounds.

Children's welfare is very effectively safeguarded as the staff have an excellent knowledge of the possible signs and symptoms of abuse and the procedures to follow if they have concerns about a child, which are in line with the Local Safeguarding Children Board. There is a designated member of staff who has completed an advanced child protection course, children's existing injuries are duly recorded and good working relationships are in place with the school and other agencies.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children of all ages thoroughly enjoy their time at the group and are very well supported by the caring, attentive staff. They settle quickly to activities of their choosing, with a very strong focus on child-led activities. Flexible planning for school children ensures they have a general theme to consider but staff are always happy for children to change the plans to suit their own interests. Staff support children on a very individual basis, allowing time to sit back and observe as well as offering advice and support, when required. School children happily self select from a range of board games and arts and crafts activities or become involved in more active, physical play. Some choose to read quietly or sit and chat amiably with their friends, whilst deciding what to do next. Staff support parents and children by listening to children read, if requested.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Children are forming excellent relationships with their peers and the staff. Children are always fully engaged and interested through the staff's skilful support and interaction, which greatly benefits their learning. Children ably find their name throughout the session, such as when hanging up their coat, registering themselves, at snack time and when using particular equipment. They respond well to their name at registration time and are learning to negotiate. For example, only two children at a time can use the computer, both stick their name on the computer and negotiate with each other when they need to swap. Staff use large sand timers with children who initially find negotiation difficult, to encourage this skill. Children are encouraged to notice the changes in their environment on a daily basis. When playing outside, they talk about the weather, the buds on the trees and the colour of the leaves. Children are very familiar with daily routines and confidently practice their self-care skills, such as washing their hands, putting on their coats,

helping themselves to snacks and pouring their own drinks. They put any left over snack in the bin and put their bowl and cup in the sink for washing.

Children giggle and chat constantly in their play. They help each other to dress up, fastening buttons and pulling down long dresses. They decide to go on a train journey and ably move the chairs so they are in a row. Staff encourage children's creative skills by getting out labels, which show that the area is now a platform and provide children with real train tickets and a train timetable to extend their play. Staff join in eagerly when invited, encouraging children's thinking skills, problem solving and number recognition effortlessly into their play and totally enriching their experiences. Staff value this time and extend it to include all children, encouraging them to think about what they can see from the train window. Children become rapt in their play. Some children dress up as animals for the others to guess what they are. They make noises as they move around the room. Staff include letter sounds into their play as they talk about the sound of the train and use musical instruments to make the noise. Children recognise the clickity-clack sound and know that 'track' rhymes with 'clack'. Staff continually introduce new words to the group, such as 'funnel', checking children's understanding before clearly explaining what it is and its purpose. Children spontaneously name numbers and letter sounds in their play. They can count mainly accurately to sixty-three and are encouraged to identify numbers and meanings of signs from the displayed road signs in their outdoor play space. This ensures that they are continually extended in their learning. They are eager to partake in painting activities and expressive when the water turns red, after they have washed their hands.

Children are making excellent progress in their learning as the staff team have such an excellent knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage and plan an exciting curriculum which covers all areas of learning and identifies clear aims and objectives. Children's assessment system clearly shows their progress through the stepping stones to allow staff to plan for the next stage in their learning. The assessment system shows evidence of children's work, photographs and ongoing observations, which clearly shows children's fantastic achievements. Staff confidently abandon their plans when they recognise the benefits of children's initiated play and are extremely skilful in weaving all areas of learning continually into play in a fun, exciting way which adds depth and meaning as well as continual challenge. After children enjoy their train journey, some want to play with the trains and all listen to a story to continue their learning. Staff encourage children to sing loudly and softly. They check children's understanding of positional language, such as 'beside' and 'opposite', as they demonstrate the meaning. They actively encourage children to reflect on what they know, which provides a firm foundation for their growing knowledge.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children's individual needs are exceptionally well met as all the staff respect and value each and every child in their care. Children learn about diversity through their access to a wide range of resources, such as puzzles, dual language books, games, posters and musical instruments which reflect positive images. In addition, staff plan a wealth of activities around a variety of festivals, such as Chinese New Year, Easter and special celebrations, to increase children's understanding. Some staff are trained in using Makaton, a form of sign language, to aid communication with children whose first language is not English. Staff also use a range of laminated pictures with children to explain the order of the day, so children know what to expect. Children also have access to left handed scissors to develop their physical skills and meet their individual needs. Children greatly benefit from the staff's caring and gentle attitude.

They give them a cuddle when they have fallen over, calm and reassure them and let them choose a special sticker for being brave. This encourages children's high self-esteem.

Children with additional needs are very well supported by the experienced, professional staff, who work with parents and other professionals to help children to achieve their best. Staff seek ongoing training to further their understanding and show an excellent awareness of being able to identify any issues through ongoing observations. Clear goals are set for individual children to ensure their continual progression. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children's behaviour is exemplary as all the staff are excellent role models who treat all children with the utmost respect. They encourage 'please' and 'thank you' and give children their full attention when listening and talking to them. They routinely praise and encourage children's positive behaviour, such as 'good sharing, well done', and get down to the child's level to gently rub their back and reassure them as they talk. Staff use very effective systems to encourage good listening skills. For example, they shake some bells to gain children's attention when they want to speak to the whole group and use sand timers to encourage good sharing and negotiation skills.

Children's care and learning is enhanced by the effective sharing of information with parents. The group's comprehensive policies and procedures are discussed with parents and all parental consents are in place. There is a whole file of information available to them, which includes some parental survival guides which include tips on encouraging children to be good, dealing with tantrums and how to give children more confidence. The partnership with parents and carers for nursery education is outstanding. The staff provide a wealth of information to parents, with some available in a range of different languages to aid their understanding. The Foundation Stage is explained through print and photographs of children's play and parents are asked to complete a profile on their child so that staff have a clear understanding of their starting points. Parents receive regular newsletters and planning clearly explains how parents can promote children's learning at home. For example, staff suggest children help with chores, such as washing and drying dishes, and making patterns in trays of flour. Children's assessment records show a clear record of their progress to share with parents.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides care. Children's care is significantly enhanced by exceptional organisation and the excellent team work of professional, caring, committed staff. There are excellent systems in place for staff recruitment, induction and their ongoing professional development. In addition, staff receive a staff handbook for future reference. The staff team is very consistent, well trained and all have excellent knowledge of the National Standards, which greatly benefits children's care.

Children greatly benefit from the fantastic organisation of daily routines which ensures sessions flow well and children are continually engaged. Children are well supported by wonderful staff who have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities and deploy themselves well. A secure staff team ensures excellent consistency between the breakfast club, pre-school sessions and after school club, as the same documentation is used with clear registration systems. Documentation is well organised to ensure confidentiality and benefit children's care.

The leadership and management of nursery education is outstanding. The group are extremely well led and managed with all staff dedicated to improving the outcomes for all children. They meet regularly as a staff team and attend ongoing training. They continually make changes to improve the outcomes for children.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection one recommendation was raised relating to meeting the requirements of the Fire Safety Officer. A letter is on file detailing the visit and no recommendations were raised. This benefits children's safety.

At the last nursery education inspection, two points for consideration were raised relating to further developing the procedures for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the provision and improving the resources available to support children's awareness of cultural diversity. Both of these have been well addressed. The provision is well managed with good systems to support staff and ensure the provision is well monitored. Additional resources reflecting positive images of diversity have been extended, through making good use of the local library to gain bi-lingual books. This aids children's care and 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:

The quality and standards of the care are outstanding. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are outstanding.

WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of care are outstanding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of nursery education are outstanding.

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