

# Little Acorns Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY362250
<b>Inspection date</b>	15 July 2008
<b>Inspector</b>	Helen Blackburn
<b>Setting Address</b>	Valley House, Towngate, Mirfield, West Yorkshire, Wf14 9JG
<b>Telephone number</b>	01924 499210
<b>E-mail</b>	
<b>Registered person</b>	The Dan Leisure Group Limited
<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 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?

Little Acorns Day Nursery is one of 11 nurseries and a number of crèche provisions managed by The Dan Leisure Group Limited. The nursery registered in 2007 and operates from three rooms within a converted school building. It is situated in a residential area in Mirfield. A maximum of 62 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 07.30 to 18.00, all year round. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 55 children on roll aged under five years, of these 15 children receive funding for early education. Children attend from a wide catchment area. The nursery has systems in place for supporting children with learning difficulties, disabilities and who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs ten members of staff, including a cook. Of these, eight hold appropriate early years qualifications. The nursery is a member of the National Day Nursery Association.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

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

The provision is good.

The environment for children is clean and staff maintain this by implementing effective hygiene procedures. For example, they have good nappy changing procedures and regular cleaning routines to minimise the risk of spreading infection. This includes using different coloured cloths for certain tasks, which reduces the risk of cross-contamination. Through everyday practical routines, the children are developing a good understanding of personal hygiene. They know to wash their hands at appropriate times, such as before they eat. The older children know why they need to do this as they explain that germs can make them ill.

The management of illness is good to ensure children's health is protected. For example, staff are vigilant in monitoring ill children and respond appropriately by sending them home, which minimises the risk of infection to others. There are effective procedures in place regarding the administration of medicines to children. For example, staff record relevant information regarding the medication and implement the group policy accordingly. For example, senior members of staff take full responsibility for administering all medications. In addition, staff maintain comprehensive care plans regarding any children with specific medical needs and all staff are made fully aware of these to ensure children's health is paramount.

The children have good opportunities to be active and to exercise, which supports them in leading a healthy lifestyle. The children regularly play outdoors; they go on walks, play games and enjoy activities that involve moving in different ways. There is a good range of equipment available to the children that supports their physical development, both indoors and outdoors. For example, the babies enjoy the freedom to move around their environment independently, they excitedly reach for toys and access resources that encourage them to walk, crawl and stand. Resources, such as bats, balls, slides, bikes, tunnels, wheeled toys and scooters help the children to develop their balance and coordination skills. For example, older children skilfully manoeuvre small bikes around obstacles, stop and start confidently. In addition, through mark making activities, building, construction, painting and completing jigsaws the children are developing their fine motor skills and dexterity well.

The nursery has a high regard to promoting healthy eating to ensure they support children's healthy growth and development. They plan and provide a wide range of balanced nutritional meals that incorporate children's individual dietary needs. Meals include a variety of freshly prepared home-cooked meals, such as chicken pie, fish pie, vegetarian dishes, pasta, meat, fruit, vegetables and salads. Mealtimes are a relaxed and social experience for children. They sit in small groups and interact with their peers. The staff incorporates babies' individual routines into the day and provide good opportunities for them to acquire new skills as they learn to feed themselves. The older children develop their independence skills as they serve their own food and pour their drinks. All children are able to eat their meal at their own pace.

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

The provision is good.

The children are cared for in an environment that is safe, secure and maintained in appropriate condition. The nursery is undergoing major refurbishment in all areas, with some areas already being complete, for example, the baby room and office space. This refurbishment is having a positive impact on enhancing the environment for children. The children are safe through a

number of good safety precautions in place. These include staff vigilantly supervising the children, ensuring all dangerous items are out of reach and good security measures regarding entering the premises. In addition, staff carry out daily safety checks and adhere to the detailed risk assessments and health and safety policies to minimise accidents and hazards. The children are developing a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe. They take part in regular fire evacuation practises and know how to play safely. For example, staff explain the dangers of throwing sand and explain to the children how to walk safely up and down the stairs.

The children access a good range of resources that are safe and maintained in good condition, which is continuing to extend as part of the refurbishment plans. The organisation of resources and activities on low shelving units or in boxes enables the children to access them safely and independently. The children are cared for in rooms according to their ages. Within the rooms, there are all the necessary facilities to promote children's welfare, such as comfortable areas for children to sleep and areas for dining and play.

The staff have a good understanding of child protection issues and their knowledge enables them to protect children from harm. They are aware of their responsibilities and follow clear procedures if they have concerns about a child. For example, they understand the importance of maintaining accurate records and taking positive action to report their concerns. They are aware of the Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures and their child protection policy takes into account these procedures. In addition, to safeguard children's welfare, password systems are in place if unfamiliar adults are collecting children. There are comprehensive procedures in place to ensure staff are suitable to care for children. These include detailed recruitment and vetting procedures, which the organisation ensure reflect current employment law and legalisation.

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

The provision is good.

The friendly approach of the staff contributes to promoting a welcoming and relaxing atmosphere for children. This results in the children being happy and settled. There is a good range of children's work, posters and photographs displayed around the setting, which provides a sense of belonging for children.

The staff interact well with the children and they are actively involved in their play, which results in good relationships between them. The children respond well to staff and they enjoy spending time with them. For example, the older children enthusiastically play games and sing with staff, concentrating for long periods because they are enjoying the experience. The younger children eagerly show adults what they are doing as they explore the compost. The babies, laugh, smile and babble when staff interact with them. The babies are also comfortable in approaching staff for reassurance when upset. All the staff know the children well and this enables them to effectively meet their individual needs. This includes incorporating children's individual sleeping and feeding patterns into the nursery routines.

The children are eager to learn, interested and enthusiastic about what they do, enjoying their time at the nursery. All children access a wide range of activities and experiences to meet all their developmental needs, such as creative play, physical activities, sensory experiences and imaginative play. Children in all rooms are busy and involved in fun activities throughout the day. For example, younger children eagerly explore the texture of the paint on their hands; older children enthusiastically play outdoors and the baby's splash in the water with pleasure and explore the texture of the sand on their bare feet.

The staff have a good understanding of child development and they use this to plan a stimulating range of activities and experiences for children. However, at present, the staff are in the process of how they plan and record children's progress to take into account the Early Years Foundation Stage. This means that they are working to two systems during this changeover. For example, the staff are making good use of the 'Birth to three matters' framework for the younger children and 'Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage' for the older children, whilst trying to take into account the changes they are making. This means that some aspects of the planning are not always up to date, such as evaluations or intended learning outcomes. As part of the changes the staff understand the importance of involving children in planning and they are making positive steps towards providing activities that build on individual children's interests rather than a theme.

#### Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The staff have a good understanding of the 'Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage' and use it to plan the curriculum programme for children, although the systems they use for planning are changing. They provide a varied range of continuous play provision and planned activities, which cover all the areas of learning. The staff monitor and record all children's progress to help them meet individual children's development needs. They use observations, children's work and photographs to enable them to do this. To help staff identify and plan for children's next steps in learning, they make use of either the 'Birth to three matters' framework or the 'Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage'. Again, they are making changes to how they record children's progress, which has resulted in some of the records not being up to date or disorganised as staff prepare for the changeover. Although, documentation relating to planning and children's progress are a little disorganised and some aspects not completed in all cases, such as evaluations, staff's knowledge of the children ensures the children make progress and that activities meet their needs.

As a result of the varied curriculum programme, staff interaction and good teaching methods, such as asking children a good range of open-ended questions the children are making good progress towards the stepping stones. The children are happy, interested and motivated learners who are eager to join in activities. They make independent choices as they freely select from a varied range of resources. They have positive relationships with others and they enjoy playing with their peers, for example, in the role-play area. Their behaviour is good and they work as a group to celebrate achievements. This contributes to promoting their personal, social and emotional development.

The children's mathematical skills are developing well. They enjoy taking part in a good range of practical and fun activities that help them have a good understanding of mathematical concepts. For example, they confidently count how many cups of water it will take to fill the container. They use a good range of mathematical language during play, such as big, hard, full and empty. They enjoy matching and sorting objects, by colour, shape or size and older children are able to name some simple shapes.

The children are confident and engage easily in conversations with others. Their pre-writing skills are developing well through being able to access a good range of resources to support this. For example, mark making activities, painting and creating marks in the sand and shaving foam. Access to these activities result in the older children being able to write their own name. The children enjoy looking at books and listening to stories, which supports their early reading and concentration skills. These activities contribute to supporting children's communication, language and literacy skills.

The children are curious, inquisitive learners; they regularly ask questions and show a great interest in what they are doing. Through play, they learn about living things as they take part in planting activities and enjoy exploring the garden looking for mini beasts. The children access a good range of programmable toys and equipment to help them learn about technology. For example, they confidently use the computer negotiating their way around games by controlling the mouse. This supports children's development in knowledge and understanding of the world.

The children thoroughly enjoy being creative. They express themselves well and use their imagination to share their ideas and thoughts. For example, they make jellies out of the sand and feed the dolls in the home corner, constantly chatting as they play. The children explore a good range of media, texture, musical instruments and art activities to develop their creativity. They enjoy baking, painting, exploring malleable material, listening to music and creating three-dimensional models, such as rockets.

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

The provision is good.

The staff's approach to managing children's behaviour is positive; they praise children's achievements and encourage them to be kind and polite. They ensure children have clear boundaries and routines, which includes providing clear explanations when dealing with minor disagreements. This results in the children behaving well. For example, the older children work together to fill a token jar with beads, which they receive on a regular basis for positive behaviour. They are proud of themselves when the jar is full and enjoy their reward. The children play well together and enjoy each other's company. For example, the younger children are happy to play alongside their peers and the older children enjoy playing games together. Through activities, discussion and staff's role model, the children are learning about right and wrong, sharing and taking turns. This also contributes to children having a positive self-esteem as their achievements are recognised. In addition, the group policy reflects the effective strategies in place.

The children have a good sense of belonging within the group. Their work is valued and displayed around the setting and they are encouraged to contribute their own ideas. For example, all children freely choose what they want to play with as they move around their environment and select resources independently. The children are developing a good awareness of their local community and the world in which they live. This contributes to children having a positive self-image and a respect for others. They are polite and enjoy activities that involve raising money for local charities and community groups. There is a good range of resources and activities that provide positive images of others so that children learn and understand about diversity. For example, posters, books, dolls, cooking utensils and activities that celebrate religious and cultural festivals. In addition, the events coordinator takes on the responsibility for ensuring the children are involved in a variety of activities that promote diversity, both locally and within the wider world.

There is good support for children with learning difficulties, disabilities or who speak English as an additional language. The staff are clear about what their role entails and they attend training and they work with other professionals and parents to ensure they meet children's individual needs. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. There are positive relationships between the staff and parents and they work successfully together to promote children's welfare. They regularly share and exchange information about the children's day and routines, including

written information for the younger children. The staff work to a key person system, which ensures children are cared for by a familiar adult and they liaise daily with parents. This helps towards promoting continuity and security for children. By seeking information from parents when children start nursery, the staff are able to effectively build into the day children's own routines. Through ongoing discussions, parent's evening and ready access to their child's progress record, parents can contribute to their child's learning. The staff are continuing to explore ways to enhance parent's contribution to these records. Notice boards, policies, procedures and welcome packs outline the service provided for children. Parents have good opportunities to contribute their ideas, for example, through questionnaires.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

The staff work well as a team; they organise themselves well and make good use of their time to effectively meet children's needs. For example, the deployment of staff around the nursery ensures they meet adult to child ratios. The effective key person system ensures familiar adults care for children to promote continuity. They make good use of the space within the nursery, which through the refurbishment plans continues to improve. For example, the relocation of the office provides a more open and spacious feeling within the baby room. Through effective organisation of the resources, the children make independent choices. The staff manage the routines of the day well to take into account children's individual needs. For example, babies feed and sleep according to their own routines.

There is good documentation to meet regulation requirements and to contribute to the safe management of the setting. However, a few minor aspects within the operational plan and a child's attendance register are not fully kept up to date, which contributes to providing some inaccurate information regarding the service. There are a number of policies and procedures available for parents; these provide clear detail regarding the service offered to children. Information recorded on the children is clear and accurate, such as emergency details. This means that staff promotes children's welfare and ensures they effectively care for individual children.

The leadership and management of the group is good. Management and staff are open to ideas and suggestions to promote positive outcomes for children. They work closely with the local authority and access training courses to explore ways to enhance what they offer children. They demonstrate their commitment to improving the nursery for children through the comprehensive refurbishment plans, investing in resources and through the staff-training programme. Detailed induction programmes ensure staff know what is expected of them and appraisals support their continuous development, which promotes positive outcomes for children.

Through evaluating activity plans, have regular meetings, accessing training, using questionnaires and seeking advice from other professionals the nursery is able to monitor their provision and service. This includes sharing good practice ideas with other settings managed by the organisation. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

Not applicable.

## **Complaints since the last inspection**

Since registration 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 operational plan and registers of children's attendance are kept up to date at all times.

#### **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):

- continue to develop the planning and children's progress records and ensure they are kept up to date (also applies to care).

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)