

Acorn Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	EY233564
Inspection date	22/06/2009
Inspector	Kelly Eyre
Setting address	2 Roman Road, Luton, Bedfordshire, LU3 2QT
Telephone number	01582 574390
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Type of setting	Childcare on non-domestic premises

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

The provider must provide a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must provide a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Childcare (Inspection) Regulations 2008 regulations 9 and 10).

The setting also makes provision for children older than the early years age group which is registered on the voluntary and/or compulsory part(s) of the Childcare Register. This report does not include an evaluation of that provision, but a comment about compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Register is included in Annex B.

Description of the setting

Acorn Day Nursery opened in 2002 and is privately owned. It operates from two converted residential buildings in the Leagrave area of Luton. The premises are accessed by a low step. Children have access to the fully enclosed outdoor play areas.

The setting receives funding for early education. It is open each weekday throughout the year and sessions are from 07.30 to 18.00. The setting is registered on the Early Years Register to provide 70 places and there are currently 84 children attending who are within this age group. The setting serves the local and neighbouring communities. The nursery currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and several children who speak English as an additional language.

The setting is also registered to offer care to children aged over five years. This provision is registered by Ofsted on both the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. Children occupying these places share the same facilities as the children in the early years age range. There are currently no children on roll in this age range.

There are 20 staff members. Of these, 17 hold relevant childcare qualifications and two are currently working towards a qualification.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall, the quality of the provision is satisfactory. Staff know the children well, enabling them to offer appropriate support so that children are included and benefit from the activities. They also take time to find out about children's interests, incorporating these into the daily planning and thereby enhancing children's enjoyment of their play and learning. The honest approach to self-evaluation means that the manager and owner have a clear overview of the setting's main strengths and weaknesses, utilising this information to help develop effective plans to continue improving daily practice.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- develop the planning and assessment procedures so that these clearly show children's next developmental steps and how these are fed into the ongoing planning
- review the procedures at snack and meal times to provide opportunities for children to develop their independence skills
- develop further opportunities for children to express themselves in their play and in their choice of resources.

The leadership and management of the early years provision

The manager and owner provide clear support and guidance to staff. There are suitable procedures to support the efficient running of the setting, helping to ensure that children are cared for in a secure environment. Sound policies relating to safeguarding children ensure that they are protected. For example, there are robust procedures for checking that all staff are suitable to work with children. Children's safety is further promoted as appropriate risk assessments have been completed and staff carry out daily safety checks. Ongoing explanations from staff mean that children are gaining a clear understanding of safety issues, such as how to use outdoor equipment safely.

There are effective procedures for evaluating daily practice. The manager and owner have a positive approach to feedback and demonstrate a genuine desire to continue to improve the outcomes for children. Examples of recent improvements include the use of an additional room for older children, meaning that they can be offered a wider range of appropriate activities. There are clear plans for the continuing improvement of the whole setting to offer children further opportunities. However, children's development is not fully promoted because the organisation of snack and meal times does not consistently offer opportunities to develop their independence.

The setting works appropriately with parents and carers, keeping them informed of children's activities and progress through the use of daily communication sheets and diaries and regular newsletters. There are effective procedures for obtaining information from parents about children's routines, abilities and preferences. This information is used to inform the daily planning of activities.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Children are offered a suitable variety of activities and play opportunities that enable them to make effective progress in all areas of learning and development. There are clear procedures for assessing children and monitoring their progress. However, children's development is not promoted to the optimum as the assessment and planning process is not fully utilised to feed children's next developmental steps into the overall activity planning. Staff demonstrate a thorough understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage and use their knowledge to ensure that children are consistently offered a balanced range of activities. However, children's independent learning is not fully promoted as they are not consistently enabled to express themselves through their play and their choice of resources.

Babies and new children settle well because there are clear procedures to find out about their normal daily routines. Staff record this information and ensure it is available in the child's base room so that all staff are aware and observe this. Appropriate support from staff encourages children to extend their play and think further. For example, children playing with toy animals and a construction set are encouraged to name the animals as they include them in their play, making up a

story as they go along.

Older children are generally well supported by staff in developing their play and their interests are often incorporated into the planning. For example, when a number of children showed an interest in the three bears story, staff helped them to transform an area of the setting into the 'Three Bear's Cottage' and provided associated activities such as using craft materials to make representations of the porridge and the different sized chairs. Similarly, children are appropriately supported in developing their knowledge of the world around them through simple role play scenarios. For example, older children made a 'Doctor's Surgery', exploring play medical instruments and equipping a 'reception area' with chairs, magazines and leaflets.

Effective use is made of outdoor areas in order to offer children a further range of opportunities. Babies and young children have their own garden area where they are able to play safely with an appropriate range of equipment. Older children enjoy accessing outdoor equipment such as ride-on toys and the slide, using a range of resources to build their own obstacle courses. Their understanding of the natural world is increased as they plant seeds and grow vegetables.

Children are encouraged to use their mathematical knowledge to solve simple problems. For example, they sort objects according to size, discussing the concepts of 'big, medium and small'. They are beginning to learn about writing for a range of purposes, for example, writing invitations to their teddy bear's picnic. Children are offered suitable opportunities to promote their understanding of the uses of information and communication technology. They access a computer and incorporate equipment such as telephones into their role play. They have appropriate opportunities to develop and explore a range of physical movements. Babies are encouraged to stand and walk and older children build obstacle courses where they climb, crawl jump and balance.

Annex A: record of inspection judgements

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

Overall effectiveness

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	3
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	3
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	3

Leadership and management

How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	3
How effective is the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement?	3
How well does the setting work in partnership with parents and others?	3
How well are children safeguarded?	3

Quality and standards

How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?	3
How well are children helped to stay safe?	3
How well are children helped to be healthy?	3
How well are children helped to enjoy and achieve?	3
How well are children helped to make a positive contribution?	3
How well are children helped develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	3

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Annex B: the Childcare Register

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are: Met

The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are: Met