



## Acorns Early Years Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY243975
<b>Inspection date</b>	31 January 2006
<b>Inspector</b>	Beryl Witheridge
<b>Setting Address</b>	Joy House, Dykewood Close, Bexley, Kent, DA5 2JU
<b>Telephone number</b>	01322 550568
<b>E-mail</b>	joyhill@acornsnursery.freemove.co.uk
<b>Registered person</b>	Acorns Early Years Centre
<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?

Acorns Early Years Centre Nursery opened in 2003 and operates from 3 rooms in a purpose-built building. It is situated in Bexley, Kent. A maximum of 50 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 08.00 to 18.00 for 51 weeks of the year. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 82 children aged from 3 months to under 5 years on roll. Of these

33 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from a wide catchment area. The nursery currently supports a number of children with special educational needs, and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 19 staff. There are 13 staff qualified to an NVQ3 level and 1 to NVQ2, the manager holds an appropriate early years qualifications.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is good.

Children are provided with experiences, which help to promote their knowledge and understanding of good health issues. They benefit from good hygiene routines such as hand washing after going to the toilet and before and after eating food. Children's good health is promoted because the provider keeps effective records, which log accidents and any medication given. However, the information kept regarding existing injuries does not always include a clear explanation from parents. Children's individual health needs are met. The nursery provides health plans for children who may have particular health problems. There is written permission for seeking emergency treatment or advice for all children. Children benefit from clear agreements with parents regarding food, which ensures their dietary and religious requirements are respected. Children are introduced to healthy eating through the provision of fruit, vegetables, bread and butter at snack time. Drinks are available at all times throughout the day. The nursery has received the Kent Quality Kitemark certificate for sharing healthy snacks and food.

Children enjoy lots of physical activity, they have plenty of space and access to both indoor and outdoor play. They can make choices and decisions about what they want to play with as all toys and equipment are accessible. Children know when they need to sleep or rest. Younger children have regular routines and older children can decide if they need to rest. Staff ensure that they can rest comfortably and safely.

Babies and very young children benefit from effective hygiene routines. Surfaces and equipment are sterilised. Children use wet wipes for washing hands and faces or individual flannels which are washed after each use. They have their own care plan which is regularly reviewed every couple of months. Parents are informed daily of feeding and sleeping routines through the use of a contact book, this provides continuity of care.

Babies and young children's growth is promoted by suitable activities which extend their skills

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

The provision is good.

Children's welfare and safety is promoted through effective procedures including

emergency evacuation which is carried out regularly and recorded. Daily risk assessments are carried out and findings recorded, action is taken if there are concerns, a written record is kept of these.

Children play with toys which are checked regularly for hygiene and safety, toys and equipment are washed regularly, more often for babies, and broken toys are thrown away. Toys conform to safety standards. Children benefit from being able to access learning and play opportunities within safe boundaries because the nursery is built with the needs of young children in mind. Resources are at child height providing children with free choice and allowing them to make decisions. Children find the setting welcoming because the necessary facilities are in place to promote their enjoyment and safe development. Even the youngest children know how to keep themselves safe; when bending to pick up a toy which has rolled under a table a young child is reminded to 'mind your head' as they bend down to pick it up.

Children's welfare is promoted because the provider ensures that all staff working with children know how to put the comprehensive child protection procedures into place.

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

The provision is good.

Children's emotional, physical social and intellectual capabilities are promoted as they enjoy a range of freely accessible games, toys and equipment. They are given choices, and options, they can make decisions which extends their independence. Children's learning is extended by good planning of stimulating, interesting ideas which encourages them to ask questions and think about what they are experiencing. Children are excited and eager to learn, they want to try new experiences and join in with opportunities to do something they haven't done before. Children enjoy social opportunities, they share their activities and they enjoy snack and meal times together. Younger children are gradually socialised into the next room as they reach 2 and then 3 years, they are given the chance to settle in at their own pace. Babies and very young children enjoy being with staff as they are all down at the floor level playing with them. Staff provide them with appropriate toys and experiences to learn how to communicate with each other, they praise them constantly. Younger children show their enjoyment and excitement at taking part in group activities such as listening to music and singing songs. The staff use props to make the song more interesting such as finger puppet bees when singing a song about bees or plastic ducks when singing '3 little ducks'.

Birth to three matters is used very effectively for encouraging all aspects of progress and development of the younger children. Staff have embraced it and are using it wholeheartedly to ensure that the youngest children in the nursery are achieving well. They are recording their progress which is shared with parents and is also passed onto the next room as a child progresses through the nursery. All toys are being evaluated to ensure that they are meeting the children's needs and are providing them with continuous and stimulating experiences and learning opportunities.

## Nursery Education

The quality of teaching is good. Children are making consistent progress towards the stepping stones and early learning goals. This is because the staff working with them have a sound knowledge of the Foundation Stage and understand how young children learn. The staff know their children well and the keyworker system ensures that they have a good knowledge of the developmental needs of each of their children. The planning is well documented and uses the children's records and the identification of next steps to lead the planning. However, some incidental records are not always inserted into the records but are left loose in the folders, which could have a detrimental effect on the effective recording of children's progress through the stepping stones if they got lost. Regular evaluations help staff to focus on the success of activities and future planning.

Children show a very strong sense of belonging as they play and learn. They are confident in themselves and show good self esteem and independence. They are able to make choices and decisions about what they want to do because toys and equipment are all freely and easily accessible. They are interested and excited about learning new skills or partaking in new experiences. Children understand between right and wrong and consider the consequences of actions on others. Children communicate well, they listen and take turns. They are eager to learn new words and use them, for example while feeling toys inside a box which they have to describe they learn words such as 'springy and spiky' and can use them in context. Children are confident speakers and talk openly to adults and peers alike. They use a variety of mark making tools and most are able to write their names and identify the letters, linking them to their sounds. They attempt to write for other purposes such as writing on their pictures to describe their drawing. Children show an appreciation of books and stories, they listen intently to a story and follow the text. They have free access to a good selection of books in a comfortable area. Children are interested in numbers and counting. They are beginning to represent numbers in various ways, for instance when weighing the pasta in the kitchen scales, or counting how many plates, knives or forks are required at meal times. They are beginning to solve mathematical problems by estimation such as putting the climbing frame together. Children are beginning to use comparative language such as hard and soft, they understand size, weight and shape through practical activities.

Children investigate using their senses, feeling, smelling tasting. Children learn about living things through outdoor play, they have flower boxes where they can grow plants and flowers. They follow the life span of caterpillars, keeping them in a covered area of the garden, watching them become cocoons then marvelling at the emergence of the butterflies. Children learn about themselves and one another through looking at cultures and beliefs. Children move confidently, imaginatively and safely when they use the climbing frame or throw and catch balls. Some are very competent at using tools which extend their fine motor movements such as tongs, tweezers and chopsticks. Children enjoy participating in singing sessions, they have a tidy up song which they all join in as they are tidying up. The children play with a good variety of resources to promote their creative development, all of which are easily accessible for example, role play resources, dressing up clothes encourage the children to take part in role play encouraging them to use their imaginations, take turns and share. Children have opportunities to paint their own pictures using paint,

glitter and collage, their pictures are displayed on the wall which are titled 'All my own work' thus making them valued and proud of their achievements.

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

The provision is good.

Children are warmly welcomed into the nursery and are cared for according to their individual needs. Children understand the expected behavioural boundaries set by the use of nursery rules; no running indoors, listen, use quiet voices. Children are accepted for who they are by the other children and staff treat all children with respect. Children learn about themselves and the wider world from a good range of resources promoting positive images of diversity, such as books, dolls, posters, positive images in all areas of the nursery in all pictures and 'rule boards'. The staff are good role models and manage children's behaviour in a way that promotes their welfare and development. They use distraction, speak to children quietly and reaffirm the rules.

Children's developmental needs are promoted because staff ensure parents receive quality info about the curriculum, children's progress through the use of contact books for babies and their achievements both written and verbal. Children benefit from consistency of care because there is an open access policy for parents. A formal open evening is held once a year so that parents can look at developmental records and records of transfer. Parents are given a lot of information regarding the nursery including the Foundation Stage, policies and procedures and the complaint's policy, when their child first starts. A welcome pack includes the aims and objectives of the nursery, these are also clearly displayed on the walls around the nursery. The entrance lobby also contains lots of written information regarding the nursery; what happens during the day and future improvements, such as the Out Of School Club and the refurbished garden. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

### **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

The nursery is purpose built and provides children with a well organised environment where they are comfortable and well settled. Children benefit from plenty of space to move around and can freely access the toys and resources on offer. The systems in place to ensure that the staff working with the children are suitable to do so are robust and rigorous. The registration certificate is displayed and all the required records are in place, these are shared with the parents. There is a comprehensive and extremely well written operational plan. Children's welfare, learning and care are positively promoted through the effective policies and procedures which underpin the good practices carried out in the nursery.

The leadership and management is good. Staff have a sound knowledge of the Foundation Stage and Birth to three matters, which is used to help the children to grow and develop in all areas of their life. The developmental needs and

achievements of all children are clearly documented and their future needs are planned for. Staff are committed to the promotion of the outcomes for children and the integration of care and nursery education. Regular staff meetings, appraisals, training and induction of new staff provide staff with the tools to improve and extend the experiences for the children they care for. Management regularly monitor, assess and evaluate the teaching and planning which ensures that the overall effectiveness of the curriculum is well balanced and meets the needs of every child. The provider is committed to the continuing improvement of the nursery, for example the extension of the building to provide an out of school club, the refurbishment of the nursery garden to provide children with more exciting play activities and experiences and the undertaking of the Kent Quality Kitemark, Endorsed Quality Assurance Scheme. The setting meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last inspection the nursery was asked to maintain sequential accident and medication records. To develop a system to promote the group rules and to ensure that toys and equipment provide positive images in relation to equality of opportunity. The nursery has addressed all these issues effectively.

### **Complaints since the last inspection**

There have been no complaints to Ofsted since the last inspection.

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 that existing injury records include an explanation of the injury from parents

### **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):

- ensure that staff use and keep together all the information in the children's progress records which identify next steps and lead the future planning

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