



Acorn Childcare Nursery Limited

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number EY280796
Inspection date 28 November 2005
Inspector Chris Scully

Setting Address Off Greenbank Lane,, Hartford, Northwich, Cheshire, CW8 1JJ

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Registered person Acorn Childcare Nursery Ltd
Type of inspection Integrated
Type of care 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.

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?

Acorn Childcare Nursery opened in April 2004 and is run by a limited company. It operates from a purpose-built facility, situated in the Hartford area of Northwich. The premises consist of five play rooms, kitchen, office space, staff facilities and children's toilets. Each playroom has separate access to a fully enclosed outdoor area. A maximum of 58 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery opens five days a week all year round from 08.00 till 18.00 with the exception of bank

holidays and one week over Christmas.

There are currently 100 children on roll aged from birth to 5 years. Of these, nine children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from a wide catchment area. The nursery supports children with special educational needs and who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 25 staff. Of these, 15 staff, including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications. There are eight staff working towards a qualification or an additional qualification. The setting receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a warm, clean environment. They thrive because staff follow effective procedures and practices which meet the children's individual needs. These include effective cleaning systems to prevent the risk of cross infection, such as colour coded cloths and aprons for specific tasks. Children effectively learn the importance of the need for good personal hygiene through daily routines. For example, younger children confidently line up to wash their hands before lunch and tell visitors they have to pull their sleeves up to wash their hands, and on their return announce "all clean now!". Children are confident to wash their hands after messy play and going to the toilet.

Good adult support enables children gain an understanding of staying healthy for example blowing their nose and covering their mouths when coughing to prevent the risk of cross infection. This is effectively supported by the implementation of the sick children policy. Staff know children well and are attentive to their individual needs, they quickly identify if they are unwell and take appropriate action, such as, contacting parents. Staff are attentive to children's needs and meet these very well in practice; for example, ensuring they are not exposed to foods that may trigger an allergic reaction and providing separate cutlery, plates and cups to further reduce any potential risks.

Children enjoy a range of planned activities which enable them to test and explore their physical control. They are confident to use a range of wheeled toys and move safely and with control both indoors and outside. Children are encouraged to practise their balancing and climbing skills outdoors using a range of natural resources, such as, walking along the logs and tyres; however, outdoor resources at times lack sufficient challenge for more able children. The children use a range of small resources with increasing control and confidence, for example, cutlery and scissors. Babies have good opportunities to explore their environment and are supported well by the staff. They are confident to pull themselves up on furniture and to practise their walking skills under the watchful eyes of the staff.

Children are able to sleep or rest according to their individual needs. Effective documentation enables staff caring for babies to maintain their individual routines and provide continuity of care. Older children have a sleep after lunch, which is well organised and includes calming music being played as they go to sleep. Highly effective systems are in place for the laundering of children's bedding and ensuring the risks of cross infection are minimised, for example, each child has his own bedding stored in their named basket.

All children have access to fresh drinking water to keep themselves refreshed. Staff caring for younger children ensure they are offered regular drinks throughout the day in addition to those provided at meal times. Highly effective systems are in place to ensure children's individual dietary needs are met at all times. The cook provides a range of healthy, home cooked, nutritious meals and snacks to all children whilst effectively addressing their individual needs. This includes an inventive menu which includes items such as sneaky pie, which enables her to provide children with a range of additional vegetables.

The individual needs of babies are met well in practice, with all meals and bottles provided by the setting unless otherwise requested by the parents. These are provided in line with the babies individual needs, age and stage of development.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children freely explore their warm welcoming environment. This is supported by effective cleaning systems and organisation of the setting. Children have access a range of resources that stimulate their interest and learning opportunities, such as, playing with shaving foam. Older children are confident to self select their resources from low-level storage units which successfully fosters their independence; however, younger children's choice is hindered by the units being covered with material and the resources are hidden from their view.

Generally good safety procedures are in place to keep children safe, however, the outstanding repairs to the garden fencing and laundry room do not promote children's safety. Effective systems are in place to ensure children are collected by named persons, with passwords instigated for emergencies. Risk assessments are carried out by staff daily to ensure the children's safety both indoors and outside. Children learn how to keep themselves safe through topic work and daily discussions with the staff, for example, they know how to use outdoor resources safely.

Staff have a sound knowledge of child protection issues and the action they would take in order to protect children from harm. Staff are aware to report concerns to their room leader who liaises with the child protection co-ordinator. This is supported by the child protection policy and in house training, however, the systems for referral if an allegation is made against a member of staff are not secure with regards to the interviewing of staff.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are happy and settled at the setting. They enter their rooms happily and are quickly off to play and to meet their friends. Clear plans are in place in all rooms to ensure children take part in a range of fun, interesting play and learning opportunities. Children are engaged in a range of purposeful activities, such as, making baubles out of mod rock for Christmas. Children enjoy a range of craft activities, however, the excessive use of adult led displays and the use of templates significantly hinders children's creativity and free expression.

Babies receive lots of support, encouragement and cuddles from the staff, this means the babies feel safe and secure in their care. Staff are very knowledgeable about the babies and use this information well to meet their individual needs and provide continuity of care. The effective use of daily diaries ensures the parents are kept fully informed of their babies day and progress. Babies enjoy a range of activities that are appropriate for their age and stage of development. Some babies particularly enjoyed having their hands and feet painted and become very excited. Staff are currently in the process of implementing the Birth to three framework to further enhance the play and learning opportunities to children under three years.

Children have a secure sense of belonging, they are familiar with the daily routines and remind others of what happens next, for example, as they put their coats on they encourage others to hurry as they can go outside. Children are confident and eager to question visitors as to why they are here and what they are doing. They enjoy the company of others and call them excitedly to look at the wildlife in the garden. They are eager to tell visitors about all the animals they can find such as the owl and squirrels. Staff provide children with open-ended questions to enable them to think and communicate and regularly introduce new words for example when painting children's hands staff talk about the paint being squidgey, and gooey.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff have a sound knowledge of the Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage and plan a range of activities to cover the six areas of learning; although, none of the staff have attended any specific training regarding the Foundation stage. The recently appointed staff team work well together and are in the process of revising the planning systems. The planning encompasses the six areas of learning but, does not provide opportunities for staff to evaluate the activities or provide information with regards to the next steps in their learning. Assessment systems are in place to chart children's progress, however, they do not contain information on how children have achieved the various stepping stones or future learning opportunities. Staff provide children with a range of interesting activities that actively engage their interest. For example, children are particularly eager to look at ice blocks, they talk about them melting, how they are made and their texture at various stages of the melting process. Staff are skilled at providing open-ended questions that enable children to think, communicate and solve problems.

Children are confident to see to their own needs and are becoming confident eager learners. They are inquisitive and ask visitors questions as to the purpose of their visit, and to show them what they can do. Children are supportive of one another; for example, one child found that they could not open the bathroom door as their hands were covered in paint, they announced I can't do it to which another child stopped playing and saying I can and opened the door for them. Children are well behaved and understand the need for safe boundaries within the room and outside, children respond well to staff's request such as at tidy up time to put the toys away.

Children confidently self register using the acorn tree, staff are supportive of children and provide gentle reminders to enable them to find their name, such as sounding out the letter that begins their name. Children enjoy listening to stories and re-enacting them with staff. A particular favourite being the Gruffalo, where they are keen to help recreate the story through collage for a display. Children sing a range of songs confidently and will spontaneously burst into song, for example, one child playing in the small world sings the wheels on the bus as he moves the bus around. Children practice their writing and mark making skills within the writing area, however, they have limited opportunities to write for a purpose in other areas and the excessive use of work sheets does not contribute to the children's ongoing writing skills and development.

Children confidently count each other as they go outside with more able children counting to 10, however, there are limited opportunities for children to recognise and identify the meaning of numerals within the setting. Plans show children sing songs which help them to learn about counting and simple addition and subtraction such as five little Gruffalos, although, there are limited opportunities to solve simple problems, such as, how many more do we need through practical activities at meal times.

Children learn to take care of living things through planned practical activities, for example, growing vegetables, planting seeds and looking at the wildlife in their immediate area. Children are keen to tell visitors that they have a fox, owl, squirrels and birds in their garden. They build well with a range of construction kits and encourage others to help them to build. They have opportunities take part in a variety of art and craft activities, although, at times these are over directed by staff. They are keen to use their imagination in role play scenarios, one child shows high levels of care for her babies, she ensures they are fed and have a sleep afterwards as they are tired, she then makes a bed for herself and pretends to go to sleep before going shopping.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

All children have equal access to the activities and opportunities offered. All children are included in the activities provided; staff are knowledgeable about the children's individual needs which are met well in practice by the staff. Staff use information gathered from the parents well to ensure children's individual needs are met, for example, how babies like to be fed which ensures continuity of care.

Children develop an understanding of their local community and the wider world

through planned activities, although, there are limited positive images displayed within the children's rooms. Children celebrate a range of festivals through out the year which incorporate the nationalities of the children who attend; for example, South Africa day and opportunities to look at France, Holland and Italy as well as other festivals, such as, Chinese New Year. Children with special needs receive appropriate care and education from staff, who liaise closely with the child's parents and other professionals to ensure they meet all their needs, which may include providing additional staff to support the child.

Children are generally well behaved. They respond well to the staff's requests and have a clear understanding of the boundaries in place which enables children to feel safe and secure. This is supported by the behaviour management policy and systems implemented by staff, however, the policy does not include information on how bullying will be addressed. Children receive lots of praise and encouragement from the staff for their achievements and efforts which has a positive impact upon their confidence and self-esteem. Children are polite and take turns well and show consideration for one another. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents is satisfactory. Parents receive good quality written information on their child and the setting which includes the daily diaries to chart the progress of younger children. Parents are supportive of the setting with several helping to plant fruit trees and to create the nature garden early on in the year. Regular newsletters and notice boards keep parents up to date on thematic work and how they can become involved in their child's learning at home and at the setting.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The leadership and management are satisfactory. All staff are fully inducted which means they have a secure understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Clear, effective recruitment and vetting procedures means suitably qualified and experienced staff are employed. Regular appraisal systems ensure staff's development and training needs are met, although, this has not been addressed with regards to the Foundation Stage. Regular staff meetings ensure staff are working in a consistent manner.

Detailed policies and procedures are in place; though, there are some omissions with regards to the behaviour management policy regarding action to take if bullying occurs, and the action to take should a child protection allegation be made against staff. All legally required documentation which contributes to the children's health, safety and well-being is in place, although the accident record is not currently completed by the member of staff who dealt with the accident.

A good ratio of staff who are qualified in childcare work with the children on a daily basis. Rooms are well organised to enable children to move freely between different work areas, successfully fostering their choice and independence. Overall, the needs of the children are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

The setting has successfully addressed the two recommendations from the last inspection. Registers are well maintained in all rooms and clearly show staff and children's arrival and departures. The organisation of the lunch time period has been improved to ensure sufficient staff are with the children at all times and their individual needs continue to be met well during this period of time. In addressing these issues the setting has enhanced the children's safety and well-being.

Complaints since the last inspection

There has been one complaint relating to National Standard 12: Working in Partnership with parents and carers, about the collection of children from the setting, and National Standard 7: Health, regarding informing parents of children's accidents.

An investigation was carried out by the provider.

Following the investigation no further action was taken.

The provider remains qualified for registration.

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

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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):

- ensure the missing fence panel is replaced and the changes to the laundry area conform to fire regulations
- revise the use of templates to ensure children's creativity and free expression is successfully fostered and developed
- revise the procedures for allegations made against staff within the child

protection policy; the behaviour management policy regarding bullying, ensure the accident record is completed by the person who dealt with the accident

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):

- improve upon the staff's existing knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage, stepping stones and early learning goals
- ensure assessments clearly identify the next steps in children's learning, and ensure this information is used effectively to plan future learning opportunities for children
- improve upon the opportunities for children to practise solving simple mathematical problems, to identify numerals within the setting and understand their meaning.

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