



Acorn Under-Fives

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	148637
Inspection date	10 November 2005
Inspector	Judith, Mary Butler
Setting Address	Oakland Infant School, Butler Road,, Crowthorne, Berkshire, RG45 6QZ
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Registered person	Acorn Under Fives
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Sessional 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 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?

Acorn Under Fives opened in 1986 and is managed by a voluntary committee of parents. It operates from a purpose built building within the grounds of Oakland Infant School in Crowthorne. Children have access to two rooms and cloakroom facilities. There is a fully enclosed area available for outside play. A maximum of 23 children may attend at any one time. The setting is open each weekday during term time and on limited days during the school holidays. Sessions are from 09:00 until 12:00 and

from 13:00 until 15:30.

There are currently 59 children on roll. This includes 3 and 4-year olds in receipt of nursery funding. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The nursery serves the local area. The setting is able to support children with special educational needs and English as an additional language.

Seven staff work with the children. Over half the staff have early years qualifications and two staff are working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children enjoy a good range of physical activities to develop their large muscle skills and contribute to a healthy lifestyle. Staff make very good use of the outside area and provide children with opportunities to move freely between the setting and the garden during the session. Children access a wide variety of resources when playing outside, for example construction and role-play toys. Children are confident and develop their gross motor skills using a range of outdoor equipment such as sit and ride toys and climbing apparatus.

Water is available throughout the session and children help themselves and pour their own drinks as they need them. Snack time is a sociable occasion and children have the opportunity to eat a range of healthy and nutritious food at their own pace. Staff miss opportunities to encourage children's independence skills, serve themselves and make choices about the food they wish to eat. Staff discuss and record individual children's dietary requirements and parental preferences about food and drink.

Children are becoming increasingly independent in their personal care and are aware of the importance of personal hygiene. Staff give gentle reminders to children about washing their hands before snack time and after using the toilet. They act as good role models and follow procedures for protecting themselves and the health of children, for example washing their hands before preparing snacks. Several staff hold first aid certificates and all of the required documentation to record accidents and administration of medication is in place. Parents sign all completed paperwork. This ensures they are fully aware of any accidents or incidents that have happened to their child.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The premises are clean and well maintained. Staff use notice boards to display children's artwork and create a warm environment for children. Children enter the setting happily and with ease. Staff offer support to those children who find it difficult

to leave their main carer. Staff identify and minimise risks to children through extensive safety checks within the setting and the outside areas. This ensures children can play freely in a safe and secure environment. Children are developing an awareness of keeping themselves safe, for example talking to the staff member about holding onto the banister when coming downstairs. Children and staff practise regular evacuation procedures, staff record the outcome of these to ensure children's safety at all times.

Staff set up the rooms and prepare the activities prior to the children arriving at the beginning of both sessions. This creates a stimulating and child centred environment. Children are developing their independence and confidently select the toys and resources they wish to use from the low shelving and storage units. Children access a wide range of age and stage appropriate toys, resources and activities.

Staff have a clear understating of child protection procedures and the signs and symptoms of child abuse. They regularly attend training and support meetings. Staff are very clear about the routes to follow should they have concerns about a child in their care. This ensures children's welfare and safety at all times.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy and confident in their environment. They use the available resources enthusiastically, and chat confidently to each other, staff and visitors to the setting. Children select the resources they wish to play with from the good range available and attractively displayed in low units. Children are comfortable in their environment and play happily with each other. Older children are making friends with their peers. Staff and children have developed strong relationships, staff involve themselves in children's play and offer them a high level of support. Children benefit from this involvement and enjoy the interaction with staff in one to one and small group situations. However, the organisation of large group times does not hold the attention of older more confident children who become distracted. Staff show a good knowledge of the Birth to Three Matters framework and the curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage. They use this to plan a varied and fun curriculum for children in their care.

Nursery Education

The quality of nursery education and teaching is good. Children take part in the range of activities and resources enthusiastically. Staff set up the rooms prior to children arriving and create a welcoming fun environment. Staff's effective planning ensures children access and take part in a good range of activities to allow them to make progress through the stepping-stones towards the early learning goals. Children develop their independence skills through the freedom of choice and range of resources available to them. Staff encourage the children to join in with conversations and contribute their thoughts and feelings, for example considering what will happen to a bowl of food if they put it on an uneven surface. Children enjoy books and stories and most children are able to sit and listen at large group times. Staff provide children with opportunities to recognise words in print through the clear labelling of familiar

objects around the rooms. Children are beginning to be aware that print carries meaning and confidently recognise their names as they enter the setting and at snack time. Children are confident in their mark making skills and practise these within the daily routines, for example in the garden, easel painting and freely chosen drawing activities. Staff provide children with a good range of opportunities and resources to develop their imaginative skills, such as role-play in the setting and garden.

Children are learning to take turns and show co-operation in their play, staff act as good role models and encourage the children to share the toys and resources. They give children a high level of praise and encouragement in their play and this helps develop and build children's self-esteem. Children use mathematical language in their everyday play, for example higher and lower when playing in the garden. They are confident in their use of numbers and use simple calculation skills in everyday activities, such as counting the children at register time. Children learn about the world around them through different themes and topics, they are becoming aware of the traditions and cultures of other people. Staff provide children with opportunities and resources to develop their large and small muscle skills. They freely access the outside area within the daily routine and are able to self-select from a good range of toys and tools within the two rooms.

Staff discuss the children with parents and have a good knowledge of their individual family backgrounds, needs and preferences. Planning covers all areas of learning and staff undertake daily observations of children in free play and planned activities. Staff use these to update the children's development records and plan for their next steps in learning. Children's progress is recorded through the stepping-stones towards the early learning goals. Staff use a range of consolidation techniques such as re-visiting topics and questioning to extend and reinforce children's learning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Staff value the children as individuals and have a sound knowledge of the individual children in their care. Good relationships between children and staff are in place and children are developing strong bonds with their peers. Staff give children constant praise and encouragement and act as good role models. Children are learning right from wrong through the consistent boundaries in place. Children access a range of resources and topics to reflect the society they live in. This enables them to develop a positive attitude towards the wider community and other people. There are effective procedures and policies in place to support children with special educational needs although none currently attend. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is met.

Staff and parents exchange information at each end of the session. They work together to ensure the transition from home to the setting is smooth and children's individual needs are met. Parents complete an entry profile when their child starts at the setting. This ensures staff are fully aware of children's starting points, needs and preferences in their play. Parents receive comprehensive and accurate information

about the setting through the prospectus, notice boards and regular newsletters. A rota system gives parents the opportunity to spend time in the setting, observe their child playing and discuss their progress with the staff.

The partnership between parents of children in receipt of funding for nursery education and staff is good. Parents receive information about the Foundation Stage through the prospectus, newsletters, notices and the verbal communication that takes place each day. Staff invite parents to regular evenings where they have further opportunities to discuss their child's progress, view their work and discuss their next steps in learning.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Staff make good use of the available space to maximise play opportunities for children. Children are able to move between the inside and outside areas during the free play session. Staff have a good knowledge of their individual responsibilities and roles within the setting, with the emphasis being on spending time playing and working with the children in groups and in one to one situations. The committee and staff regularly review the extensive policies and procedures and most of the required documentation is in place. However, there is no procedure to follow should a child be lost from the setting. All staff have undertaken the vetting procedure and this ensures children's safety and welfare within the group. Staff have a sound knowledge of the individual children through discussion with parents and the developmental records in place. Clear policies and procedures support staff in working very successfully in partnership with parents and carers.

Leadership and management are good. Staff demonstrate a good knowledge of the Birth to Three Matters framework, curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage and National Standards for sessional day care. They confidently apply this in their work to support children's safety, learning and development. Staff are encouraged to attend training to update their knowledge and skills through the induction and appraisal systems in place. They attend regular staff meetings and use these to discuss individual children's progress, daily routines, planning and staff training needs and requests. Staff have opportunities to discuss issues on a daily basis at each end of the sessions. Staff evaluate the activities and routines, they use this to plan future themes, activities and identify children's next steps in learning. The provider meets the needs of the range of children for whom they provide.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the provider was asked to ensure procedures were in place to follow should there be an allegation of child abuse against a staff member, complaints, and to ensure that all documentation included Ofsted as the regulator. They were also requested to ensure risk assessments were carried out in the small room and outside areas.

Comprehensive complaints and child protection procedures are in place and all

documentation contains the name and contact details of the regulator. The committee and staff regularly review the policies and procedures to ensure information is correct and up to date. This ensures children welfare is protected at all times. Staff and committee undertake regular risk assessments and daily safety checks to ensure children's safety.

Complaints since the last inspection

There are no complaints to report.

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.

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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):

- develop the organisation of snack time to allow children to serve themselves and make independent choices
- ensure a procedure is in place to follow should a child be lost from the setting

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):

- review the organisation of large group times to ensure children do not become distracted

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website:

