



Little Acorns Nursery Ltd

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY100881
Inspection date	10 November 2005
Inspector	Jacqueline Patricia Walter
Setting Address	Middle Lane, Knottingley, WF11 0BZ
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Registered person	Little Acorns 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 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 Nursery is a privately owned nursery that was registered in 2002. It provides full day care for children aged from birth to eleven years. It operates from four main play rooms in a purpose built building, which is located within the grounds of Knottingley High School in Knottingley, West Yorkshire.

A maximum of 75 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each week day from 07.30 to 18.00 hours for 50 weeks of the year. The

children have access to a secure enclosed outdoor area

There are currently 105 children aged from 4 months to 11 years on roll. Of these 15 three-year-olds and three four-year-olds receive funding for nursery education. Children attend from the surrounding areas. The nursery currently supports children with special educational needs who do not receive funding. It also supports children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 24 staff, of which 20 including the managers hold appropriate early years qualifications. Three staff are working towards higher early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children stay healthy because practitioners are active in following current and appropriate environmental health and hygiene guidelines, policies and procedures. For example, Staff are vigilant in following good procedures such as, using aprons, gloves and wiping changing mats after changing the babies nappies. They provide and use individual face cloths for toddlers and most staff have completed an appropriate first aid course, which ensures there is first aid provision for all the children at all times. They implement a clear sickness policy, which ensures that children with infectious conditions undergo exclusion periods and those that become ill are collected by parents. This in turn helps to ensure the spread of infection is minimal. Staff work effectively with parents in promoting children's health. For example, there are good systems that work in practice, to ensure the safe administration of medication and accidents are recorded appropriately and shared with parents at all times.

Children are developing a very good awareness and understanding of health and hygiene practice. Staff implement flexible routines regarding toileting, which supports children's growing independence, for example, more able children have adjoining access to the toilets and are therefore able to be independent in their personal needs and younger children are escorted to the toilet, where staff gently support good hygiene practice. More able children understand the importance of good hygiene. They know germs need to be washed off hands before eating and brushing their teeth keeps them healthy. Younger children are familiar with everyday routines such as, washing their hands before meals and after using the toilet.

Children have good opportunities to enjoy outdoor play with access to the outdoor area for at least two sessions on most days. They are able to acquire and develop very good physical skills both inside and outside the setting through a wide and challenging range of equipment and activities. This includes an adventure style outdoor area with balancing beams, slides and bridges, in addition to a variety of wheeled vehicles and equipment such as, stilts. Children enjoy running and climbing and older children experiment confidently with movement. For example, they confidently jump and hop from one stepping log to another and use the wooden lid of

the sand pit as a stage to practice their singing and dancing. In addition to the outdoor facilities younger children enjoy and develop competence in physical skills through access to a small climbing frame and slide sited in their room and staff actively support babies and children with special needs in trying out developing skills such as, walking and sitting correctly, which has a positive effect in encouraging them to set their own challenges. Children are able to rest and sleep according to their individual needs. Staff know the children well. They recognise signs of tiredness and plan and support appropriate periods of rest.

Children are well nourished through staff and parents working effectively together in providing healthy and nutritious meals and snacks. The setting employs a cook who provides both hot and cold meals that are 'home cooked'. For example, she provides various, pasta dishes, different meat dishes, and a variety of vegetables. A bowl of fruit is always made available for children to also choose from. Foods supplied by parents are fully labelled and appropriately stored by staff ensuring it is safe for children to eat. Staff encourage the importance of healthy eating through talking to the children individually, making reference to the posters displayed depicting healthy foods and through themed activities that promote healthy eating. For example, children under two years recently took part in a food tasting activity where they tried various fruits. As a result all children are developing a good understanding and older children know things such as, too many sweets are not good for their teeth. Children are offered regular drinks with all meals and snacks. However, younger children do not have opportunities to take on responsibility for their individual needs as only the children aged three to five are able to access water independently. Staff meet a variety of dietary needs successfully because they work well with parents. They collect information from them on children's individual and special dietary requirements, including their likes and dislikes. Quick reference lists, which are displayed in each room ensure all staff are fully aware and the children's individual needs are fully met.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Staff take positive steps to minimise risks of accidental injury to children. For example, they ensure covers are on all electrical sockets, safety gates are fitted to each doorway to ensure children cannot exit their rooms unsupervised, a risks assessment on the indoor provision is reviewed regularly and the outdoor area is risk assessed by staff each time the children use it. As a result children can safely use the premises. There are good fire safety precautions in place. Fire equipment is regularly serviced and staff are fully aware of emergency evacuation procedures. They regularly carry out drills with the children in each room noting and acting on any problems that occur. Which results in a calm, speedy but safe evacuation procedure being implemented.

Children are able to develop a good sense of belonging through the warm and welcoming accommodation where space is creatively used. For example, older children are familiar and enjoy using a separate dining room to eat their meals. Staff deploy themselves effectively and implement suitable systems for checking and

cleaning toys and equipment, which allows the children to independently and safely use all resources.

Children are kept very safe on outings. Most staff are aware of how to implement effective operational procedures for the children's safe conduct. For example, they always taking a mobile phone and First aid kit with them. The setting has designated vehicles to transport children from schools and on outings and holds the required documentation demonstrating the drivers are appropriate and the vehicles are safe for children to use. They also ensure at least a minimum of two staff are always present.

Staff encourage children's understanding and learning in keeping themselves safe well. They use themed activities connected to festivals such as 'bonfire night' to promote understanding when outside the setting and as a result older children are developing a good understanding. For example, they know they must not go near fires. Staff are consistent in addressing safety issues within the setting and often explain why behaviour is unsafe. For example, children are informed that running in the setting may causes them to fall and hurt themselves.

Staff have a generally good knowledge of signs and symptoms of child abuse through either their qualification training, the settings child protection policy, which is included in their induction course and through the registered persons system of encouraging all new staff to complete a child protection course. They are fully aware of the procedures to follow if concerns are raised. For example, they maintain confidential records, inform line management of the concerns and then follow area child protections committee guidance. As a result children's welfare is protected well.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are very confident within their setting and benefit from staff who are interested in them. They are happy and settle very quickly supported well by staff who know them and offer warm welcomes and reassurance when required. Children move freely around their rooms selecting activities independently. Older children are confident in approaching staff for help with their activities. For example, children ask for help in completing tasks such as pouring their drinks and in writing cheques during a role play activity. They are developing a good self-esteem through lots of praise from staff for both effort and achievement. As a result they are proud of their work and are willing to show it to others.

Children are fully involved and acquire new knowledge and skills through a stimulating, wide range of toys, planned activities and equipment, which reflects all areas of learning. They are motivated and interested in their activities. For example, babies are curious and pull themselves up to investigate play materials and older children enthusiastically join in with stories answering questions about the illustrations and participating with familiar refrains. There are weaknesses in the planning and assessment systems used for young children however, staff are currently developing and implementing new systems to reflect the Birth-to-three framework, which in turn will ensure children develop to their full potential. Continuity

in meeting children's individual needs is not always met due to records of their development and progress not being continuously held as they progress through the setting.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching overall is good. Staff have attended training on the foundation stage and successfully put this into practice. Planning is comprehensive and covers all areas of learning in the curriculum. Detailed planning on focused activities ensure clear learning intentions are identified for the children. Children are making good progress towards the early learning goals. However, the current assessment system is very basic. It does not clearly show at what stage children are at in their learning, how they approach their learning or their next steps. As a result individual development is not effectively used to inform planning and children, particularly those more able, are not always sufficiently challenged. However, staff have recognised the inadequacies of this current system and are in the very early days of introducing a new assessment system, which will identify the children's progress in detail and ensure the relevant information is used to inform planning. The rooms that the three and four-year-olds use is organised effectively and attractively set out to stimulate children learning in most areas. Staff use open ended questions to effectively challenge the children's thinking. However, they often miss opportunities to extend the more able children knowledge. Resources are generally well used although there are few opportunities for children to develop further skills in the early stages of reading.

Both three and four-year-old children separate from carers with ease. They show increasing confidence in linking up with others and have a positive approach to new experiences. For example, most children are eager to investigate new play equipment that had just been obtained by staff. Children are keen to communicate and volunteer with enthusiasm to explain or talk about experiences that interest them. More able children use talk to connect ideas and are able to distinguish some letters and sounds. Children listen join in enthusiastically with stories in group session, however they show little interest in books at any other time and rarely use the book corner. Three and four-year-olds count reliably up to five and beyond. They are able to use positional and number language in their play and are developing some calculation skills through activities such as, singing. Some four-year-olds are confident in solving problems. For example, they inform staff when they have got calculations wrong such as, requiring three more drinking cups not two. Children show interest in the lives of people familiar to them and are developing a good understanding of the natural world through topics and focussed activities such as, growing flowers in the garden. They enjoy using all their senses to explore a wide range of materials, including glitter, play-doh and clay.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children behave well, they are given lots of praise and encouragement to learn to share and take turns and begin to accept the needs of others. They are developing

suitable understanding of right and wrong through age appropriate and consistent methods used by staff. For example, staff explain several times why it is not appropriate to run in their rooms pointing out the consequences of the children's actions. However, staff do not encourage the more able children to develop further understanding of responsibly behaviour by involving them in devising acceptable modes of behaviour or in helping them find solutions.

Staff value children as individuals and there are effective arrangements in place to care for children with special needs. For example staff work actively with a portage worker in promoting children's physical skills. Children are developing a positive attitude to others and are developing a good understanding about the wider world and community by celebrating festivals, accessing a suitable range of resources that promote positive images of culture, ethnicity and gender and visiting places of interest within their community. For example the local florists.

The partnership with parents is satisfactory. Children benefit from a good information sharing with parents on the general information of the setting. For example, there is prospectus, regular news letters, and various notice boards all made available to parents. Staff share details on children's individual care through daily chats and record sheets for younger children, which ensures continuous continuity and consistency in the children's care. Parents are also informed that profiles consisting of children's work are available upon request. Very little information is shared with parents on the foundation stage, for example, plans that identify children's learning from the continuous provision is displayed in the areas of play and quotes from the curriculum are noted in the provisions prospectus. Staff make some attempts at involving parents in their children's learning, For example, they encourage artefacts to be brought into the setting and encourage participation in fund raising events and outings.

The settling fosters children's spiritual moral and cultural development well.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The registered person implements appropriate systems regarding the recruitment and vetting of staff, which ensure children are well protected and cared for by staff that have knowledge and understanding of child development. For example, job descriptions are held, references and qualifications are checked and interviews are undertaken for both initial employment and when staff return to work after sickness. They are however, still in the process of implementing new systems regarding criminal record checks.

Most staff including students have high levels of awareness of the comprehensive policies and procedures of the setting and of their individual responsibilities. They undergo a clear induction process, which includes the receipt of a staff handbook. As a result policies and procedures work in practice and effectively promote children's health, safety, enjoyment, achievement and ability to make a positive contribution.

Staff work effectively as a team and cover and support each other well. They use

time effectively and have routines in place that help young children feel safe and secure. Staff demonstrate a high regard for the well being of all children having completed numerous training opportunities both external and internal. Some evaluation and monitoring systems are in place. For example, the planned focus activities with the older children are evaluated.

The leadership and management of nursery education is good. There is clear commitment by the registered person to improve the care and education of the setting. This includes the welcoming of suggestions made by an advisory teacher, staff currently working towards a quality assurance scheme and the developing and updating of staffs knowledge and understanding of the early learning goals through training opportunities. There is however, more scope to monitor and assess the curriculum and children's progress.

The provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Since the last care inspection staff have taken positive steps to improve the safety of the children. They now ensure regular fire drills are completed with the children, they have devised a procedure for lost children and have completed and periodically review a risk assessment on the premises.

They have taken positive steps to promote equality of opportunity and anti discriminatory practice by obtaining additional resources regarding culture and religion for the children to access.

They have also provided appropriate facilities and opportunities for children aged two to five to sleep or rest although these are not always effectively used.

Staff have also taken some steps towards addressing previous key issues raised at their last funded inspection.

They have implemented some new resources and have attended training on early learning goals and assessments in order to effectively challenge the older children's learning.

They have included some quotes on children's learning from the curriculum guidance in the prospectus to help parents understand the educational programme and have changed the assessment system to improve links between the planning and assessment.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since October 2004 a complaint was received in relation to Standard 11 Behaviour Management. The complaint related to inappropriate actions being taken by staff in response to children biting other children. Ofsted asked the provider to investigate these concerns and followed this up by conducting an unannounced visit. Ofsted found the provision was working in a sensitive and proactive manner to prevent the

inappropriate behaviour of children. The provision remains qualified for registration.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see by 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):

- ensure children's individual needs in learning and development are effectively promoted, with regard to records of what children do being made available to all staff throughout the nursery
- provide further opportunities for the more able children to take on some responsibility and develop further understanding of behaviour and safety within 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):

- continue to develop the assessment system to clearly identify children's individual progress towards the early learning goals and their next steps in learning and ensure practitioners use this information to plan and suitably challenge the more able children
- develop the systems to ensure parents are fully informed about the Foundation Stage and children's individual progress
- develop and implement the systems to monitor and evaluate the curriculum to identify areas for improvement.

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:
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