Little Acorns Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number  EY305577
Inspection date  09 December 2005
Inspector  Susan Elaine Heap

Setting Address  Knowle Lane, Meltham, Holmfirth, West Yorkshire, HD9 4HL

Telephone number  
E-mail  
Registered person  Little Acorns Day Nursery
Type of inspection  Integrated
Type of care  Full day care

This inspection was carried out under the provisions of Part XA of the Children Act 1989, as inserted by the Care Standards Act 2000
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 satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Little Acorns Day Nursery was registered in May 2005 and operates from four rooms in a purpose-built building. It is situated on an industrial estate in Meltham. A maximum of 44 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 07.30 to 18.00 for 51 weeks of the year. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 53 children aged from birth to under 5 years on roll. Of these 16
children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from both the local and wider community.

The nursery employs 12 staff, 11 of whom, including the manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications. One member of staff is working towards NVQ level 2 in Childcare and Education. A cook and a cleaner are also employed.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a warm, clean environment where the staff actively promote good hygiene practice. They observe the written health and hygiene policies which contribute to children's health and safety and minimises the risk of cross infection. They wear disposable aprons and gloves when changing children, protective clothing when preparing meals and snacks and children use individual face cloths. Children's individual needs are met as the staff work closely with parents, for example, one child is settled to sleep by having a piece of music played. This follows the child's home routine and ensures continuity of care.

Children are developing an understanding of good hygiene practices to keep themselves healthy. They know to wash their hands after going to the toilet, before eating and when coming in from outdoor play and pre-school children clean their teeth after lunch.

Children are developing a growing awareness of healthy eating as the staff discuss this with them at meal times or during their play. Pre-school children are beginning to understand their own needs and know when they need refreshment. As they come in from outdoor play, they self-select from a choice of fresh or dried fruit, which is served attractively in a bowl for them, and pour themselves a cup of water. This is extended at lunch time as they serve themselves from the dinner trolley.

The staff are committed to ensuring that all children have access to fresh air or exercise daily which is enjoyable and meets their developmental needs. As a result, children enjoy a range of activities which contribute to their good health, for example, babies sleep outside in large comfy prams and toddlers access bikes and trucks which help them to develop their physical skills. Pre-school children benefit from continuous outdoor play where they choose whether they want to play indoors or outdoors. They enjoy playing games such as 'follow my leader', practicing their balancing skills by hopping or balancing on stilts or taking part in music and movement tapes such as 'Sticky Kids'.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Indoor space and furniture is organised to meet the different age groups of children, for example, in the baby room adult-sized seating provides a comfortable place to

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bottle feed or nurse babies. Children's topic and art work is displayed attractively and clearly labelled with their name and what the picture is about, which develops children's self esteem and sense of belonging.

Children's play and development needs are met through the provision of a good range of safe toys, equipment and resources. These are well maintained and address all areas of equal opportunity issues. Low-level storage units in each of the rooms ensure that even the youngest children can choose what they want to play with. This develops their independence; for example, mobile babies choose from the activity and musical toys while in the pre school room children self-select from a range of creative materials.

Children are cared for in a safe indoor and outdoor environment where staff give priority to keeping children safe. There are risk assessments and policies and procedures in place which the staff follow in practice. This ensures that children can move around safely and independently. However, a risk assessment for trips to the local woods will enhance children's safety further. Staff are vigilant and take positive steps to ensure that children understand how to keep themselves safe. For example, they give gentle reminders about not running when it is icy because they might slip and fall, and they discuss how to use scissors safely.

Children are protected well as the staff team know and understand to report any concerns to the named person. The named person equally understands her responsibility in ensuring that child protection concerns are dealt with promptly and confidentially. There is a clear child protection statement in place and copies of the Area Child Protection Committee procedures are available in each room and on the parents' notice board.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are generally happy and confident in the nursery and have good relationships with the staff. They have access to a sufficient range of resources and experiences which they are interested in. The planning of activities for children under 3 has been given particular attention since the nursery was registered. As a result, children benefit from having sensory experiences such as exploring treasure baskets filled with metal or natural materials. A toddler becomes very excited when a painting activity is set up on a low table. He scrunches his face up in excitement and squeezes his hands in anticipation and shouts "I painting, I painting!". Staff work at children's level at all times either by sitting with them on the floor or at the table and give them good eye contact which helps them become confident communicators. They spend time talking and playing with the children, helping them learn. For example, during an adult-led activity, a member of staff sets up a tea party for the dolls and teddy bears. She then invites the children to come along and encourages them to talk about healthy eating and links this to their morning snack of fruit. This helps children consolidate their learning about healthy eating and reflect on their experiences.

Nursery Education

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The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children settle well and enjoy their time in the nursery. They show interest in the activities provided for them, for example, a group of children make play dough together, or take part in singing songs led by an enthusiastic member of staff. Staff ask children questions during their play which extends children's knowledge and language. The staff have a sound knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage and how children learn. The activities and experiences provided for the children sufficiently cover the areas of learning. Planning of activities and assessment systems are in place and show that staff make good observations of children's play. However, these are in the early stages of development and are not currently used to inform future planning and targets for individual children.

Children enter the setting confidently and generally separate from their parents well. Less confident children are supported by the staff as they wave goodbye. They independently choose from the activities set out for them and decide whether to play inside or outside. They are learning to share and take turns and observe the change in materials. For example, as they mix the flour and water together to make play dough, they explore the texture and discuss what it feels like while developing their fine motor skills. Children are developing in confidence during circle time as they speak about their experiences and link part of a story about Christmas to past stories and experiences. They have opportunities to use mathematics at singing time and reflect on their knowledge. For example, a member of staff asks them to choose a song with numbers in. One child excitedly shouts "I know - '1,2,3,4,5, once a caught a fish alive". Soon other children join in with their suggestions. They count on their fingers while joining in a number rhyme and calculate how many are left. They show an interest in shape and size and use language such as 'bigger', 'taller', 'smaller' as they compare the size of their constructions made out of Duplo.

They have opportunities to mark-make in the designated writing area and extend their play to include making cards for their friends and posting them in the post box provided nearby. Children are developing a sense of the wider community and are learning about different cultures, beliefs and abilities through the activities and resources available to them and through their discussions with the staff. For example, they have made Diwali candles and talk about the Nativity. They are also developing an awareness of significant events in the lives of their friends as they eagerly await the birth of the child’s baby sister or brother. Opportunities for children to explore the local community include walks in the woods. Each day they have opportunities to develop their physical skills as they play on the outdoor equipment or join in music and movement activities. They are able to negotiate space well when sitting down on the mat, so that they do not squash anyone.

**Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's needs are identified through the initial placement visits and are shared daily, either through the babies' record sheets, or verbally with parents. As a result, good relationships are being developed between the staff and parents. Although
there are no children with special needs who attend at the moment, the staff
understand from where to access the help of other professionals when needed.
Children's knowledge of the wider community is fostered well using a variety
of quality resources and books which contain positive images of race, culture and
disability. This is supported by activities and discussions about people who help us.

Children generally behave well throughout the nursery because staff act as good role
models and consistently praise children for their achievements. Pre-school children
choose to display their own art and creative work on a low-level notice board which
helps develop their self confidence and self esteem. Children are learning to behave
kindly towards one another and have a growing awareness of the needs of others.
For example, a child offers another child a piece of fruit and the member of staff
praises her for sharing and being kind. They are learning to take turns as they play
games with each other.

The partnership with parents is satisfactory. There is a wide variety of information
available for them via the written policies and procedures, parents' notice board, daily
diaries and monthly newsletters; however, concerns raised by parents are not
recorded. The staff have developed relationships with parents which are informal and
information is shared verbally and in writing on a daily basis through the use of daily
diaries. This works well within the baby and toddler rooms, however it is not as
developed in the pre-school room; for example, there are no systems in place to
share pre-school children's assessment and progress records with parents or involve
them in supporting children's learning. Overall, children's social, moral, spiritual and
cultural development is fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The leadership and management of the nursery education within the setting is good.
Children are cared for by a staff team who have a strong understanding of their roles
and responsibilities in helping children enjoy, achieve and keep them safe. They
benefit from being cared for in a provision where the majority of staff have
appropriate early years qualifications or are working towards them. The provider has
systems in place to support staff, such as the regular staff meetings where the
nursery policies are discussed in detail or by organising additional training. This
ensures daily practice supports children's care and welfare.

Children's care is enhanced by the efficient and effective organisation. For example,
the provider has a comprehensive business plan in place which has a clear focus of
what needs to be achieved, by what date and what has been achieved so far. The
daily routines and deployment of staff are organised to provide good levels of support
to children. This enables them to participate in a balanced range of activities, both
inside and outside, build good relationships with the staff and helps them settle and
feel secure.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of children attending.
Improvements since the last inspection
Not applicable.

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

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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):

- complete a risk assessment for outings to the woods
- maintain a record of all concerns or complaints received 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 observations of what children do are used to plan the next steps for their play, learning and development
- improve partnership with parents by developing systems of involving parents in children's learning and by sharing children's assessment records on a regular basis.

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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