



## Acorns Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY266330
<b>Inspection date</b>	13 March 2006
<b>Inspector</b>	Ann Doubleday / Josephine Ann Northend
<b>Setting Address</b>	The Old Police House, Little Market Place, Masham, North Yorkshire, HG4 4DY
<b>Telephone number</b>	01765 680203
<b>E-mail</b>	
<b>Registered person</b>	Acorns Childcare
<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 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?

Acorns Pre-school is a committee run group. It opened in 2003 and operates from the former Old Police House, now operating as a community building, in the centre of Masham. The pre-school and holiday club have sole use of the annexe at the back of the building. This consists of one room with a private entrance and adjacent toilet facilities. A maximum of 20 children may attend the group at any one time. The pre-school is open from 08.00 to 17.30 Monday to Friday during term time and some

sessions during holidays. There are usually clearly defined periods of pre-school and after-school sessions, but the two age groups occasionally operate together when this is appropriate.

There are currently 24 pre school children and 16 children from 4 to 11 years on roll. Of these, 15 children receive funding for nursery education. Children attend from Masham and the surrounding area.

The staff team comprises a manager and two deputies, supported by one assistant. Three staff hold appropriate early years qualifications and one member of staff is working towards a qualification. The setting receives support from the Local Authority and is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's physical development is supported satisfactorily, with opportunities to regularly play outdoors. They have use of an enclosed public play area, a large field and now have their own enclosed play area adjacent to the building. Children can rest or be active according to their individual needs.

Children follow some good personal hygiene routines as they wipe their noses, dispose of tissues appropriately and wash their hands before meals and snacks. However, they do not always wash their hands after using the toilet and do not receive sufficient reminders from staff. This does not fully promote good hygiene routines. During snack times good hygiene practices are not always implemented, resulting in children's health needs not being fully promoted. For example, cups are used after being dropped on the floor, some children eat food directly from the table and a cloth used for wiping up paint was also used to wipe the table where children eat.

The staff are aware of the need to promote healthy eating. Children receive varied and nutritious snacks and packed lunches are stored appropriately to ensure they remain safe to eat. Staff work appropriately with parents to ensure they are aware of and meet any special dietary requirements. Children are offered drinks with their snack and lunch, but do not have direct access to fresh drinking water at other times.

Most staff hold first aid certificates. Appropriate sick children, accident and medication procedures are in place and parents are aware of the procedures; this ensures children's health needs are satisfactorily met.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children move around freely while easily accessing a range of safe, developmentally

appropriate furniture and equipment. Most equipment is washed and checked regularly to ensure it remains clean and safe for children to use. Resources are suitably organised in child height furniture to encourage independent access.

Children are cared for in a clean and welcoming environment and their art work is displayed. However, the premises are not always sufficiently warm. Although adult to child ratios are correctly maintained, staff are involved in domestic and management tasks, which means, children are not adequately supervised at times to ensure they remain safe inside the building. For example, children climb on chairs, run around the nursery room at times and do not receive consistent reminders from staff. Children learn to keep themselves safe outdoors, for example, as they line up against the wall independently, to check for vehicles.

The security of the premises is good, but the visitor record is not adequately maintained. There are clear lost and uncollected child policies in place. Fire procedures are implemented well. Regular risk assessments are completed, accident records are reviewed and some safety hazards have been minimised, for example, electric sockets are protected. However, the supervision of children when using sharp knives is not always adequate and the plastic bags containing junk materials are a potential hazard. This results in children's safety not being fully met.

Staff have received child protection training and have sound understanding of their role and responsibilities in the event of a concern. Relevant documentation is in place. This means the welfare of children is protected.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children enjoy their time at the pre-school, they arrive happy, settle well and are very aware of the routines, for example, they place their own lunch boxes into the large refrigerator. They are beginning to develop good relationships with staff, which develops children's sense of self. However, the behaviour of some children impacts on the groups ability to sit quietly and concentrate when needed. Communication skills with children are satisfactorily supported through appropriate adult to child interactions.

There is a good range of equipment and resources, easily accessible for all ages of children. There is a satisfactory range of activities planned and set out for children as they arrive. Staff are beginning to implement some aspects of the Birth to three matters framework and this is evident in their planning. Older children are collected from school. They arrive happy and are offered good choices of suitable activities. Children are greeted warmly and there is good discussion around their school day.

#### **Nursery Education.**

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff have a reasonable understanding of the early learning goals. A varied range of activities are planned. Assessment records are completed and children's progress linked to the stepping stones. However, this information is not used to inform planning and does not

accurately reflect the children's developmental stages. Teaching does not always fully promote children's learning, which leads to some inappropriate challenge for older and more able children. Staff are not consistent in the messages they give to children and do not always manage their behaviour well.

Most children are interested and motivated to learn. They separate from their carers well and have generally good relationships with staff. Children explore natural objects satisfactorily, for example, as they explore snow and coloured rice. They are beginning to use their senses, but this is not extended for the older and more able children. They construct well with a purpose in mind, for example, they use bricks and follow a pattern to make a rocket.

Children are developing satisfactory communication skills. They confidently hold conversations with staff, but their vocabulary is not always extended well. They confidently join in with familiar nursery rhymes and have good access to musical instruments. After initial disruptions, where children are not sitting and concentrating, they begin to listen during story time and predict what is going to happen next. A good range of books are readily available and accessed by the children. Some children handle books carefully and turn the pages correctly, however, others do not use them appropriately. There is a mark making area, but it is not set up well and children are not encouraged to use writing in every day activities. Some children link sounds to letters spontaneously, but this is not extended by staff. Children are not encouraged to recognise their own names.

Children use programmable toys and a computer and they use the mouse well to confidently complete a simple program. Children are developing some understanding of number; they can count beyond 10 by rote and are beginning to recognise some numerals. For example, they pay for their snack using paper money, looking at the menu for the cost of food available. They use simple calculation in number rhymes, but do not use number or problem solving sufficiently in every day routines. Children are beginning to recognise and name some shapes and use size language appropriately. They create well with a variety of materials and recognise and name many colours, mixing them well to create other colours. Most children use scissors and small equipment well. Children use their imagination well in play. For example, they go for a picnic in the snow and have to return as they forgot to bring the dog.

Children are not always well behaved. They do not always share and take turns. Children are developing some understanding of themselves, their family and the local community, but do not undertake activities to learn about the wider world. They know that they need to keep themselves warm in winter, but are not developing sufficient understanding of features of the weather or the days of the week. They extend their large physical skills well through a variety of experiences, including regular use of the outdoor area; they run and climb steps confidently and they develop satisfactory levels of hand eye co-ordination. Children are developing some self care skills, for example, wiping their own noses and disposing of tissues appropriately. However, they do not know why they need to wash their hands, the effects of exercise on their bodies or which foods are healthy.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are happy and settled. They are welcomed by staff and the pre-school is well set up for their arrival. Planned activities are undertaken to reflect the local community and some resources are available reflecting other cultures and races, however, they are not always directly accessible to the children. There is a clear equal opportunities policy in place and children's records include relevant information. However, a key worker system is not in place and children do not always receive sufficient support from staff; this means their individual needs are not always supported. The pre-school has a clear special needs statement and the named co-ordinator has completed relevant training.

There is a clear behaviour management policy in place. However, it is not always implemented well by staff; children receive inconsistent messages from staff and are not always well behaved. Children receive some praise for positive behaviour. This fosters their spiritual moral, social and cultural development.

Partnership with parents is satisfactory. Children benefit from the two way sharing of information about their needs and daily routines. Parents receive a booklet about the setting, the Foundation Stage, the Birth to three matters framework, with ways to continue their child's learning at home. Other information is displayed on a notice board. Parents do not receive written reports about their child's progress. They are made aware of the setting's policies and procedures and can access them on request.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children feel at home and at ease within the child care environment. This means they are confident to initiate their own play and learning. Space is organised to support play opportunities for children. All staff currently employed at the setting have been appropriately vetted. There are clear staff recruitment procedures in place. Staff have job descriptions and receive induction to the setting. Adult to child ratios are correctly maintained. However, there is no key worker system in place and staff are involved in domestic and management tasks, which means they do not have sufficient time working directly with the children.

Leadership and management of the nursery education satisfactorily promotes the children's learning. Most staff have early years qualifications and up to date first aid certificates. The manager encourages staff to attend relevant training. The knowledge gained by staff is used to further support children's care and welfare. Staff's experience and knowledge of the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. However, teaching does not fully support children's learning and assessment records do not always reflect children's progress. Consequently, children do not always receive appropriate challenge. There is a staff appraisal system in place. However, the manager is not fully aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the provision, resulting in missed learning opportunities for children.

Required documents are available and they are stored confidentially. The policies and procedures in place are shared with staff and are made available to parents. However, these are not fully implemented by staff. There are satisfactory systems in place for the sharing of information with parents about the service and their child's activities. Overall the provision satisfactorily meets the needs of the children who attend.

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

At the last inspection the provider agreed to improve the complaints procedure, develop the outside play area and develop training for the special needs co-ordinator. The complaints procedure now includes Ofsted details; this means that partnership with parents has improved. The outdoor area has just been completed, resulting in children having greater opportunities to play outdoors. There is a special needs co-ordinator in place and she has attended relevant training. This helps children's individual needs to be met satisfactorily.

At the last education inspection the provider agreed to improve continuity in practice and to develop planning and assessment. The staff now meet together for weekly meetings and shift patterns are planned to allow information to be shared. This improves continuity of practice for children. Although there has been changes made to the planning and assessment systems, they are not yet developed sufficiently to ensure children's individual learning needs are fully met.

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

A complaint was received regarding National Standard 2. The Complaints, Investigation and Enforcement team investigated the allegation. As part of the investigation the provision was requested to provide an internal investigation into the concerns raised. The provision submitted a thorough investigation report detailing how the National Standards are being met and the provision remains suitable 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.

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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 staff are fully aware of and consistently implement the behaviour management policy in place (also applies to nursery education)
- ensure there is sufficient staff available to work directly with the children, and ensure sufficient supervision and consistent handling of the children to prevent accidents
- ensure the premises are maintained at an appropriate temperature
- review hygiene procedures and encourage children to learn about personal hygiene through daily routines
- ensure that each child is allocated to a member of staff who is their key person and is mainly responsible for their well being on a daily basis

### **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):

- develop the use of assessment to inform planning so that sufficient challenge is offered to older and more able children
- increase staff's knowledge and understanding of how children learn in order to improve the quality of teaching
- ensure there are formal systems in place to keep parents fully informed about their child's progress towards the early learning goals.

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