



Office for Standards
in Education

NURSERY INSPECTION REPORT

URN EY266330

DfES Number:

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 06/05/2004
Inspector Name Jean Evans

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Full Day Care, Out of School Day Care
Setting Name Acorns Pre-School
Setting Address The Old Police House
Little Market Place
Masham
North Yorkshire
HG4 4E

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name Acorns Childcare

ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name Acorns Childcare
Address The Old Police House
Little Market Place
Masham
HG4 4D

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public that the nursery education for funded three and four year old children is of an acceptable quality. Inspection of nursery education also identifies strengths and weaknesses so that providers can improve the quality of educational provision and help children to achieve the early learning goals (elgs) by the end of the Foundation Stage. This inspection report must be made available to all parents.

If the setting has been inspected previously, an action plan will have been drawn up to tackle issues identified. This inspection, therefore, must also assess what progress has been made in the implementation of this plan.

Information about the setting

Acorns Pre-school is a committee run group held in the former Old Police House, now operating as a community building, in Masham, North Yorkshire. The pre-school has sole use of the annexe at the back of the building, consisting of one room with a private entrance. There is access to a small kitchen, and toilet facilities are within the annexe. The children live mainly in Masham and the surrounding area.

The pre-school is registered for 20 children aged from 2 to 5 years. Of the children attending, 8, 3 year-olds and 6, 4 year-olds receive nursery funding. None of the children have special educational needs, and there are no children attending for whom English is an additional language.

The pre-school is open from Monday to Friday during school term times. Morning sessions are from 09:00 until 12:00, and afternoon sessions are from 12.45 until 15:15, on every afternoon except Wednesdays. In addition, the pre-school staff operate a club for both pre-school and school children on separate days during school holidays.

The staff team comprises a manager and deputy, supported by two assistants. All four have a relevant qualification. The setting is a member of Sure Start North Yorkshire and has support from an early years consultant who is a qualified teacher.

INSPECTION OF THE NURSERY EDUCATION PROVISION FOR FUNDED THREE AND FOUR YEAR OLDS.

How effective is the nursery education?

The provision at Acorns Pre-school is of high quality. Children are making very good progress towards the early learning goals in all six areas of learning. Opportunities to increase children's knowledge and understanding of the world, and enhance their creative development, are strengths of the setting.

The quality of teaching is very good overall. Staff have a thorough knowledge and understanding of the early learning goals, and present children with a range of opportunities to work towards them. Ongoing training supports this understanding. They use appropriate methods to ensure that the needs of 3 and 4 year-olds are met, manage sessions well and have high expectations for children's behaviour. They make effective use of time and resources to provide children with stimulating learning opportunities. Changes are currently being made to the planning and assessment cycle. There are plans to modify the present short-term plans to ensure that ways of meeting the differing needs of all children are more apparent. A new assessment system has just been introduced and this will be monitored to ensure that it is effective in practice.

Leadership and management of the setting is also very good overall. Staff assess their strengths and weaknesses effectively, with support from an early years consultant from Sure Start North Yorkshire, and monitor and evaluate the education provision well. They are highly committed to improving the care and education of the children. The present team is relatively new and staff members work differing sessions. With this in mind, the management team plan to investigate ways of ensuring that there is continuity in practice and that close teamwork is established.

There is a very good partnership with parents in this committee run community pre-school. Parents are given very good information about the setting, especially the educational provision. They are effectively encouraged to be involved with their children's learning.

What is being done well?

- Staff commitment and dedication, along with effective monitoring and evaluation of provision, ensures that the high quality and ongoing improvement is maintained.
- High expectations for behaviour result in children who are sensitive towards others, aware of right and wrong and able to understand the consequences of their actions.
- The programme for knowledge and understanding of the world is a strength of the setting. Children are encouraged to explore and investigate a range of stimulating objects and materials in order to satisfy their natural curiosity about the world they live in.

- The programme for children's creative development is of a high standard so that they are able to express their imaginative and creative ideas in a variety of individual ways.
- Effective management of time and resources results in opportunities for children to experience an exciting range of activities, both alone and in groups.

What needs to be improved?

- the planning and assessment cycle to ensure that planning documentation indicates how individual needs will be met, and that the new assessment system is both manageable and effective in practice.
- the development of the recently formed staff team to ensure that there is continuity in practice and that close teamwork is established.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Very good progress has been made with the action plan created following the last inspection. The setting was asked to ensure that appropriate staff training opportunities were available, and that all staff obtained a relevant qualification. In addition, resources to develop small movement skills were to be increased. All staff now have an appropriate qualification, and there is a staff development plan ensuring that ongoing appropriate training is offered and taken up. More small apparatus has been purchased, and this is used effectively indoors and on the cricket field to enhance children's small movement skills. In addition, staff are to attend training in developing learning opportunities with small apparatus in the near future.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children are interested, excited and motivated to learn by the stimulating activities provided by staff, such as baking and growing things, and by a range of visitors. They are self-confident and aware of their own needs and feelings. They behave well, with four-year-olds becoming aware of right and wrong, and three-year-olds learning the consequences of actions. There are very good opportunities for children to access the resources they need independently and to develop good personal skills.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Very Good

Children confidently use language to communicate, and negotiate well with one another. They listen and respond with enjoyment to stories, songs and rhymes, and express their imaginative ideas eagerly through language. They clearly explain their ideas, ask detailed questions and talk about their feelings comfortably. They are beginning to be aware of sounds and letters, and are making links between them. They enjoy writing for a purpose, for example, as they draw maps and make shopping lists.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children use number names with understanding in familiar contexts such as snack time. Older children are developing a good understanding of addition and subtraction through practical play based activities, for example, as they add together two groups of linked wooden circles. Staff introduce mathematical language effectively so that children begin to use appropriate words to describe shape, position, size and quantity. They are developing a keen awareness of pattern around them.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Very Good

This learning area is a strength of the setting. Children are developing good exploratory and investigative skills. They have natural curiosity, eagerly asking questions. Designing and making skills are enhanced by a wide range of tools and materials to shape, join and assemble. The children use everyday and information technology effectively to support their learning. They are learning about where they live and the natural world through exciting activities and visitors from the community.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children move confidently and imaginatively, for example, as they enjoy moving to music. They demonstrate a keen awareness of space, of themselves and others, for example, as they working together to move their parachute. They handle a wide range of tools and objects safely and with increasing control. They especially enjoy using kitchen utensils to bake. The outdoor area is being developed so that children's movement opportunities can be enhanced in a safer, more secure environment.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

This learning area is also a strength. Children have good opportunities to explore sounds, and develop a love of music, with a weekly visit from a music teacher and daily experiences of handling musical instruments, singing and dancing. They express their individuality and creative ideas well, especially through art and design, music and role-play. They respond to sensory experiences eagerly, expressing individuality as they do so, for example, as they smell and taste a range of exciting foods.

Children's spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is fostered appropriately.

OUTCOME OF THE INSPECTION

The provision is acceptable and is of high quality. Children are making very good progress towards the early learning goals. The next inspection will take place in three to four years time.

WHAT THE SETTING NEEDS TO DO NEXT

There are no significant weaknesses to report, but considerations should be given to improving the following:

- There are no significant weaknesses to report, but consideration should be given to improving the following:
- investigate ways of developing the planning and assessment cycle to ensure that systems enable individual needs to be met. In particular, include ways of supporting and extending the adult-led activities identified on short-term plans, ensure that it is manageable and effective in practice
- ensure that there is continuity in practice, and that close teamwork is established, within the recently formed staff team.

The provider must draw up an action plan within 40 working days of receipt of this report showing how the key issues detailed above will be addressed. The action plan must be made available to all parents and to the Local Authority if required. An evaluation of the action taken will form part of the next inspection of funded nursery education.