



Office for Standards
in Education

COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN EY294250

DfES Number: 515897

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 09/02/2005
Inspector Name Gillian Jefferson

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Sessional Day Care
Setting Name Little Acorns
Setting Address The Cabin
Barnard Road
Leigh-on-Sea
Essex
SS9 3PH

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name Little Acorns Pre -School

ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name Little Acorns Pre -School
Address 18 Edinburgh Avenue
Leigh-on-Sea
Essex
SS9 3SG

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality and standard of day care in accordance with the National Standards for Under Eights Day Care and Childminding; and 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

Little Acorns pre-school is run by a committee, and opened at the current premises in 2004. It operates from rooms in a village hall style premises. It is situated in a residential area in West Leigh on Sea, close to local shops and services. A maximum of 20 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open each weekday from 09:30 to 12:00 for 33 weeks of the year.

There are currently 30 children from 2 to 5 years on roll. Of these 14 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the local area.

The pre-school employs eight staff and has additional bank staff for emergency cover. Four of the staff, including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications. One staff member is working towards a recognised early years qualification. The pre-school receives support from a teacher/mentor from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP), Sure Start and is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance (PSLA).

How good is the Day Care?

Little Acorns Pre-School provides good care for children.

The group is well run and organised on a daily basis. A stimulating environment is created by staff which is welcoming for children and parents/carers alike. The vast array of resources are used to provide an interesting and dynamic programme. The consistency in the layout of the room supports the children in settling in and finding specific types of activity. Staff qualification requirements are met and additional members are attending or considering training. All required documentation is in place, but a few require a little more detail or consistent implementation. Recent changes to the person in charge have not had any adverse effects on the quality of day care or the teamwork.

Staff take on specific responsibilities and are mindful of the children's health and safety. All food provided by the group is cleared with parents/carers in line with their

children's dietary requirements and drinking water is readily available. Equal opportunities is promoted very effectively and support mechanisms are in place ready for children with special needs. Staff are aware of child protection and are organising additional training.

Children develop well and are involved in a broadly balanced curriculum that supports their language, mathematical thinking, imagination and creativity. They develop personal independence and make choices about activities. Children are generally well behaved and receive a lot of praise and encouragement.

Parents and carers work well together to meet the needs of the children. They regularly receive verbal feedback about their children's progress. Staff also occasionally put comments on the children's work highlighting the learning involved in producing the finished product or doing an activity. Newsletters and notices by the entrance provide parents/carers with information about activities and events.

What has improved since the last inspection?

N/A

What is being done well?

- Staff work hard to create a stimulating learning environment through their use of temporary notice boards and drapes to display the children's artwork.
- The vast range of resources are cleverly used to provide dynamic activities and opportunities to promote the children's involvement and interest in all areas of learning, but most effectively in their creative development.
- There is a very good programme of activities for equality of opportunities. Children learn about their own beliefs, cultures and those of others. Staff promote positive images of culture, ethnicity, gender and disability.
- Staff offer children a high level of interaction which supports children's language development. They are involved in discussion and questioning whilst children are taking part in activities and playing.

What needs to be improved?

- detail within documentation, policies and procedures.

PREVIOUS COMPLAINTS (This section applies only to inspections carried out from September 2004. The complaint record relates to complaints from the last inspection or 1st April 2004 whichever is later.)

There are no complaints to report.

Outcome of the inspection

Good

CONDITIONS OF REGISTRATION

All registered persons must comply with all conditions of registration included on his/her certificate of registration.

As a result of this inspection conditions of registration have been imposed / varied / removed and a new certificate of registration will be issued.

WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE NEXT?**The Registered Person should have regard to the following recommendations by the time of the next inspection**

Std	Recommendation
14	Ensure the detail within documentation, policies and procedures provides sufficient clarity for effective implementation by staff. (This particularly refers to detail within the lost child policy, consents to seek emergency medical advice or treatment, accident book, visitors book, and child protection policy)

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

How effective is the nursery education?

The provision for Nursery Education at Little Acorns Pre-School is of good quality. It enables children to make very good progress towards the early learning goals in their creative development and generally good progress in all other areas of learning.

Teaching is generally good. Staff have a good knowledge of the Foundation Stage and are able to promote learning in all areas through adult and child lead activities. Children receive a large amount of interaction with staff on both a one to one basis and in small groups. A stimulating learning environment is created to encourage the children's involvement. Resources are effectively used to create dynamic activities and support underlying themes. Planning has clear links to the early learning goals and stepping stones. Staff are competent in promoting intended learning through careful use of questioning, adapting them further to expand activities to broaden the children's knowledge. However four-year-olds are insufficiently challenged in a few areas of development. Regular observations are made to record the children's level of attainment and progress towards the early learning goals. Behaviour is promoted well by staff.

Leadership and Management is generally good. The newly appointed person in charge has helped maintain a strong team partnership. The group has clear aims and objectives and are developing methods to monitor and evaluate their educational provision. They show commitment to improvement through action plans, including the development of outside play area.

Partnership with parents/carers is generally good. Information about the provision and activities is made available through newsletters and notices, however the position of the notice boards does not aid their reference by parents/carers. They receive verbal feedback, but no formal procedures are currently in place for them to share what they know about their children.

What is being done well?

- The group provide a balanced range of dynamic and stimulating activities that capture and build on the children's interests and provide opportunities for learning in all six areas of the curriculum.
- Staff effectively promote the children's imaginative development through their independent access to a wide variety of resources and involvement in child lead activities.
- Close relationships are formed between children and staff allowing them to settle into the provision well and become absorbed in activities.
- Staff work hard to create a warm and welcoming environment for children and parents/carers alike. They put up temporary displays of the children's

artwork throughout each session.

- Staff have a high level of interaction with the children, supporting their language development.

What needs to be improved?

- challenges to develop four-year-olds skills in handwriting, calculation, cooperation, independence and physical development
- partnership with parents and carers to encourage their involvement and contribution to children's learning and assessment.

What has improved since the last inspection?

The pre-school has made generally good progress since the last inspection.

A unified observation programme has been put in place to enable staff to collect and record information about the children's responses to activities. However, the programme to encourage parents and carers to share their observations of their children's learning and utilise this information to contribute to assessment records, has not yet been achieved. This remains an issue at this inspection.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children develop a strong sense of self and awareness of the wider community they live in. They form close friendships, but four-year-olds still require some support to play cooperatively. Children develop a reasonably high level of independence, but do not yet pour their own drinks. They are keen to learn and be involved in the activities provided by staff. Children develop a high level of confidence and will speak in front of other children, staff and visitors. They are generally well behaved.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Generally Good

Children link sounds and letters, confidently suggesting words beginning with the same initial sound. Children freely make marks through their involvement in a variety of hand-eye coordination and craft activities. This is not yet pulled into a formal programme to further develop their early writing and handwriting. They enjoy stories but rarely access books for themselves. Children develop very good communication skills, can express their thinking and listen well to others for short periods.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children are confident in counting, and freely do so in their play and activities. Many count accurately, labelling objects to ten or over. They compare numbers but have too few chances to calculate. Children name and recognise 2D shapes, reinforced through other activities, such as using differently shaped paper for artwork. Children become aware of problem solving through occasional activities modelled by staff. They measure and compare volume and size through construction work and cooking.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Generally Good

Children have a wealth of opportunities to explore and investigate. They learn to design and make, developing a high level of skill in joining a range of materials. They become confident in using familiar household technology, such as tape recorders. A clear programme to develop their sense of time is in place, but they have less awareness of place. Children enjoy looking at objects on interest tables and learning about cultures and beliefs.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children have access to many activities that develop their hand-eye coordination and skill. They enjoy new challenges, such as using chopsticks to eat their snack. Children become very aware of their health and bodies through reinforcement and promotional activities from staff. Children learn to move in a variety of ways and use a wide range of large equipment. The children move around safely, however, the four-year-olds require more challenge.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

An expansive range of materials and media are available for children to use and explore with independence and freedom. They enjoy planned and spontaneous creative activities. Children enthusiastically sing songs and play instruments, learning about pitch, rhythm and speed. They confidently and skilfully express their ideas and feelings. Children bring a great deal of imagination to their play and link areas, eg. drawing on paper to make 'magic carpets and then acting out adventures.

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

OUTCOME OF THE INSPECTION

The provision is acceptable and is of good quality overall. Children are making generally 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: THE KEY ISSUES

- use identified next steps to inform planning and maintain progression by providing sufficient challenge for four-year-olds; particularly in developing independence, cooperation, physical development, handwriting and calculation
- further involve parents/carers in children's learning through making them aware of activities and topics, and sharing observations of their children to contribute to their assessment and development records.

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.

SUMMARY OF NATIONAL STANDARDS

STANDARD 1 - SUITABLE PERSON

Adults providing day care, looking after children or having unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so.

STANDARD 2 - ORGANISATION

The registered person meets required adult: child ratios, ensures that training and qualifications requirements are met and organises space and resources to meet the children's needs effectively.

STANDARD 3 - CARE, LEARNING AND PLAY

The registered person meets children's individual needs and promotes their welfare. They plan and provide activities and play opportunities to develop children's emotional, physical, social and intellectual capabilities.

STANDARD 4 - PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

The premises are safe, secure and suitable for their purpose. They provide adequate space in an appropriate location, are welcoming to children and offer access to the necessary facilities for a range of activities which promote their development.

STANDARD 5 - EQUIPMENT

Furniture, equipment and toys are provided which are appropriate for their purpose and help to create an accessible and stimulating environment. They are of suitable design and condition, well maintained and conform to safety standards.

STANDARD 6 - SAFETY

The registered person takes positive steps to promote safety within the setting and on outings and ensures proper precautions are taken to prevent accidents.

STANDARD 7 - HEALTH

The registered person promotes the good health of children and takes positive steps to prevent the spread of infection and appropriate measures when they are ill.

STANDARD 8 - FOOD AND DRINK

Children are provided with regular drinks and food in adequate quantities for their needs. Food and drink is properly prepared, nutritious and complies with dietary and religious requirements.

STANDARD 9 - EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

The registered person and staff actively promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice for all children.

STANDARD 10 - SPECIAL NEEDS (INCLUDING SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES)

The registered person is aware that some children may have special needs and is

proactive in ensuring that appropriate action can be taken when such a child is identified or admitted to the provision. Steps are taken to promote the welfare and development of the child within the setting in partnership with the parents and other relevant parties.

STANDARD 11 - BEHAVIOUR

Adults caring for children in the provision are able to manage a wide range of children's behaviour in a way which promotes their welfare and development.

STANDARD 12 - WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS AND CARERS

The registered person and staff work in partnership with parents and to meet the needs of the children, both individually and as a group. Information is shared.

STANDARD 13 - CHILD PROTECTION

The registered person complies with local child protection procedures approved by the Area Child Protection Committee and ensures that all adults working and looking after children in the provision are able to put the procedures into practice.

STANDARD 14 - DOCUMENTATION

Records, policies and procedures which are required for the efficient and safe management of the provision, or to promote the welfare, care and learning of children are maintained. Records about individual children are shared with the child's parent.