



Office for Standards  
in Education

## COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN 136090

DfES Number: 582926

### INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 21/05/2004  
Inspector Name Christine Mary Burridge

### SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Full Day Care  
Setting Name Acorns Nursery Ltd  
Setting Address Axa Centre Bristol, Brierly Furlong  
Stoke Gifford  
Bristol  
Avon  
BS34 8SW

### REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name Acorns Nurseries Ltd 3023352

### ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name Acorns Nurseries Ltd  
Address 7 Park Grove  
Cardiff  
South Glamorgan  
CF10 3BJ

## 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

Acorns Axa Nursery opened in 1996, and it is one of a group of privately managed day nurseries. This nursery is one of the group's three work place nurseries and is located on the Axa site in Stoke Gifford, in South Gloucestershire. Another nursery is situated in Henbury in Bristol and the majority of the remaining nurseries are in the Cardiff area. Children attending the nursery come from a wide catchment area.

There are 57 children from six weeks to five years on roll. This includes nine funded 3 year-olds and seven funded four year-olds. Children attend for a variety of days. The nursery has a baby unit that can accommodate a maximum of 15 children under the age of two. The nursery supports children with special needs.

The nursery opens Monday to Friday, 8.00 to 18.00 hours throughout the year excluding Public Holidays.

The manager and seven members of staff work with the children. Over half the staff have an early years qualification to NVQ level 2 or 3. One member of staff is currently working towards a recognised early years qualification. An accredited teacher is employed to work with the funded children on one day each week.

### How good is the Day Care?

Acorns Axa nursery provides a satisfactory standard of care for children.

The nursery rooms are bright and cheerful and there is plenty of the children's work on display. Staff create a warm, welcoming environment for children and their parents. The general organisation is satisfactory, although some policies and documents refer to National Standards that apply only in Wales. Staff work well together and there is a good commitment to staff development through training. Currently not all managerial staff are appropriately qualified, and staff have a limited knowledge of the Code of Practice for Special Educational Needs. The nursery is well equipped with a broad range of toys and materials for all age groups. Children enjoy a variety of activities that helps them progress in their development and

learning. The nursery operates a key worker system and staff make good relationships with children.

Babies are well catered for overall, individual routines are followed, activities are planned and they have lots of individual attention. They have separate play and sleeping areas and this is well managed. At the beginning of the day and over lunch periods there are times when insufficient staff are working directly with a large mixed age group of children.

Staff give children's safety a high priority. They encourage good personal hygiene through well established routines and all issues relating to children's health are appropriately managed. This includes providing varied menus and encouraging children to eat a healthy diet. Children's social skills are developing well and they are well behaved and polite.

The partnership with parents is strong. Staff make sure that parents are well informed. They receive helpful information about the setting, they can access information on the notice board and they exchange information daily. New parents are made to feel welcome through the well planned settling in procedures. Formal parents evenings are arranged twice a year.

#### **What has improved since the last inspection?**

At the last inspection it was agreed that the medication system would be reviewed, a system would be implemented for recording incidents, and members of staff would be designated with responsibility for child protection and behaviour management. The nursery also agreed to inform Ofsted of personnel changes and make evidence available to confirm that all adults are appropriately vetted. Overall satisfactory progress has been made in addressing the issues raised. An appropriate system is now in place for administering medication, the manager is responsible for behaviour management and child protection issues and a system is in place for incident recording. Ofsted have received updated information on most staff, although, currently there is no evidence of a satisfactory enhanced disclosure form for one long standing member of staff; two other staff are in the process of being checked.

#### **What is being done well?**

- Staff support each other and are developing as a team. There is a good commitment to on going training.
- Staff ensure children are cared for in a warm, welcoming environment where they have plenty of toys and activities to help their development and learning. Behaviour is well-managed.
- Children enjoy close relationships with staff who spend time sitting, talking and playing with them.
- Staff pay good attention to ensuring children's safety. They have a clear understanding of their role when practising fire safety procedures, and entry to the nursery is well monitored.

- The cook prepares healthy nutritious meals which include fruit and vegetables. Menus are varied with the season. Children are encouraged to drink plenty of water.
- Staff develop good relationships with parents through their welcoming attitude and by ensuring that parents are kept well informed.

#### What needs to be improved?

- the qualification of managerial staff
- the deployment of staff so that there are sufficient adults working directly with the children at all times
- staff's knowledge and understanding of the Code of Practice for the identification and assessment of children with Special Educational Needs
- the organisation and content of the operational plan so that documentation appropriately relates to the National Standards for England.

#### Outcome of the inspection

Satisfactory

#### 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 must take the following actions by the date shown

Std	Action	Date
2	Develop and implement an action plan that sets out how the baby-unit supervisor achieve a level 3 qualification.	27/08/2004
2	Ensure that there are sufficient staff working directly with the children at all times.	27/08/2004

##### The Registered Person should have regard to the following recommendations by the time of the next inspection

Std	Recommendation
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10	Ensure that staff have an appropriate understanding of how to implement the Code of Practice for Special Educational Needs.
14	Review all the policies and procedures to ensure that all documentation correctly relates to the National Standards (England).

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

### How effective is the nursery education?

Children are making generally good progress towards the early learning goals in all six areas of learning.

The teaching is generally good. The nursery employs a teacher to spend one day each week working with the funded children. Staff follow established routines, they know the children well and are good at developing warm relationships with the children. Resources are plentiful and of good quality. Staff provide a varied range of activities which interest the children and help them to progress. Some staff do not fully understand the stepping stones. They do not always sufficiently challenge and spontaneously extend children's learning, for example in large group activities. The systems for planning are not consistent and assessment is not always used effectively to inform future planning for individual children. Staff provide clear boundaries and children are well behaved.

The leadership and management is generally good. The manager and staff work well together and are mutually supportive. There is a strong commitment to staff training and to providing children with a secure happy environment. There are inconsistencies in some areas of the administration. Limited monitoring of the teaching means that areas for development are not always recognised.

The partnership with parents is generally good. Staff create friendly relationships with parents who are made to feel welcome. Parents have access to information about the early learning goals. A lot of information is exchanged informally with key workers and in addition to the formal parents evenings, held twice a year, parents have free access to their children's records. Opportunities for parents to contribute to their children's learning and assessment are limited.

### What is being done well?

- Children are confident, interested, and develop good relationships with each other and staff.
- Children respond well to the established routines. They are happy and settled, and they behave well.
- Children's communication skills are developing well. They are good listeners, speak confidently, and are eager to participate in group discussions and story times.
- Staff are good at re-enforcing numbers through action songs and stories, as a result, children are good at counting and they are interested in numbers.
- Partnership with parents is generally good. They are kept well informed about the setting and their children's progress through informal discussion, newsletters, information on display and regular parents meetings.

### **What needs to be improved?**

- staff knowledge of the stepping stones so that children can be sufficiently challenged across all areas of learning
- the planning involving all staff working with funded children, to ensure the curriculum is delivered with consistency; and the use of evaluation and assessment to inform future planning for individual children
- the monitoring and evaluation of the quality of the teaching and planning
- the opportunity for children to use technological toys and equipment; and the frequency and opportunity for children to freely access a wider choice of materials for making things.

### **What has improved since the last inspection?**

Overall progress in addressing the key issues from last inspection has been limited.

The following are the key issues identified, with progress indicated on each:

1. improve the overall planning of the educational programme by including ideas for extending activities for the older children and those who learn more quickly. The older and more able children now have some separate time for stories and songs, physical development, particularly on the day that the teacher spends in the nursery each week.
2. improve the quality of teaching by organising suitable activities when all children are together for free play, by grouping children for activities that are appropriate for ages and stages of development, and by matching teaching strategies, such as questioning techniques, to the abilities of the more able children. There are still times when some children do not have sufficient challenge when in mixed age groups.
3. improve the programme for physical development by making better use of the available space, grouping older children for structured activities, and providing opportunities for the more agile children to increase their climbing and balancing skills. Children now use the Axa sports hall at least one day each week; this enables them to vary the physical activities.
4. improve the programme for creative development by giving greater emphasis to open-ended creative activities in which children can express their individual ideas and communicate feelings through a different range of media. Children still have insufficient opportunity for free creative activity.

There has been a change of teacher since the last inspection. The nursery was unable to produce a copy of their action plan.

## SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

### PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children are confident and friendly. Most happily leave their parents to join in group activities, less confident children are well supported. They are interested and keen to learn. They play well together and help younger children by fetching toys and playing with them. They are good at sharing and taking turns and respond well to instructions, for example, helping to tidy up. Children's independence is developing well, but staff do not give older children sufficient responsibility.

### COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Generally Good

Children communicate well. They initiate conversation and enjoy group discussions. They are mostly attentive enjoying stories and singing. They can recount favourite stories and say why they like them. They are interested in print, recognising their own and other children's names. They can link sounds to letters, for example, naming other words starting with same sounding letter. They are keen to attempt writing by marking work. Story times and the book corner are not always effectively managed.

### MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children are interested in numbers and can accurately count objects during play. They know and use numbers spontaneously in play and can match objects to numbers. Children often use comparative language, such as, tiny, big, very very big. Staff use songs, stories and mathematical language effectively to reinforce numbers and size but children do not have enough opportunities to talk about shapes.

### KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Generally Good

Children have opportunities to investigate and explore, for example, growing seeds and planned walks outside the nursery grounds. They are developing a sense of time and place, confidently talking about past and future experiences, such as, holidays, birthdays and nursery activities. Children use small tools appropriately. Their use of the computer and technological toys and equipment is limited. Children are introduced to different customs and cultures through planned activities.

### PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children move with confidence. They can stop and change direction well, for example moving between tables without bumping, whilst carrying cups. They confidently use a range of small tools, such as, cutters, pencils, different size paint brushes. Children enjoy outside play which is limited in hot weather due to lack of shade. There is not always enough challenge for the older and more able children, for example, climbing, balancing and co-ordination skills.



**CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children have opportunities to explore colour, texture and to create through planned practical activities. Their knowledge of colours is extensive. They enjoy singing and participate well in action songs. They are beginning to use their senses by describing how things feel. They use their imagination well, in role play and small group activities, for example, creating a house from cubes. They have limited choice and insufficient free access to materials for making things.

**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**

- Ensure staff further develop their knowledge of the early learning goals so that they use spontaneous opportunities effectively to extend children's learning.
- Ensure all staff working with funded children are involved in the planning and that the curriculum is delivered with consistency, and that evaluation and assessment is used effectively to inform future planning for individual children.
- Ensure that the quality of the teaching and planning is regularly monitored.
- Provide more opportunities for children to use technological toys and equipment, and to freely access a wider choice of materials for making things.

*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.*