



**Office for Standards  
in Education**

## **COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT**

**URN 509573**

**DfES Number: 584843**

### **INSPECTION DETAILS**

Inspection Date      25/11/2003  
Inspector Name      Michele, Karen Beasley

### **SETTING DETAILS**

Day Care Type      Full Day Care  
Setting Name      Little Acorns  
Setting Address      St John's Room  
                                 19 St John's Road, Hedge End  
                                 Southampton  
                                 Hampshire  
                                 SO30 4AF

### **REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS**

Name                      Mr Kevin Crowley

## 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 Day Nursery opened in 1997. It operates from three rooms on two floors of a converted Parish, and from a garden annexe. It is located near to the town centre of Hedge End. The nursery is privately owned and serves the local area.

The nursery is registered for 60 children from birth to under five years and there are currently 89 children from three months to three years on the roll. This includes 25 funded three year olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The provision has three children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery is open five days a week all year round. Sessions are from 07:30 to 18:00.

Three part-time and sixteen full-time staff work with the children. Thirteen have early years qualifications and three staff are currently on training programmes.

### How good is the Day Care?

Little Acorns Day Nursery provides satisfactory care for children.

The setting is bright, warm, clean and well maintained. The nursery has effective recruitment procedures and ensures that staff appointed are suitably vetted. A high importance is placed on recruiting qualified staff and encouraging staff to advance their qualifications. Staff ratios are usually maintained. The provision has a wide variety of toys and resources which are stimulating, fun, interesting and provide sufficient challenge.

The nursery mostly ensures that children are cared for in a safe and secure environment. Staff are active in promoting good health and hygiene practices in most areas of the nursery. Meals are cooked and probed on site and menus are displayed.

Staff know the children well and children appear to be happy and confident. Staff

encourage and help the children in their play, cuddle and praise them. Strategies for dealing with behaviour are mainly through discussion and time out for several minutes.

Parents are happy with the care their children receive and they receive some written information. Children are discussed daily with their parents. Some documentation is in place.

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

At the last inspection, the group agreed to fit additional toilets and hand basins in the nursery. This has not been carried out. Most children who use these facilities are in nappies or are potty training. Presently there are three child height toilets and hand wash basins which are adequate for the children's needs.

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

- The nursery places high importance in recruiting qualified staff and encouraging staff to advance their qualifications. As a result there is a high proportion of suitably qualified and experienced staff in all areas of the nursery.
- Staff know the children well and children appear to be happy and confident with them. In the Pooh Corner room staff respond with warmth to the babies, talking to them and constantly asking them things to extend their language and their learning. Staff encourage and help the children in their play, cuddle them and praise them.
- The setting is bright, warm, clean and well maintained. Children's artwork is displayed on the nursery's frieze boards, walls and ceilings. The cloakroom area has child height pegs with pictures above them for the children to relate to. Many items of interest are displayed on the parents' notice board to read or take away. This provides a welcoming environment for the children and their families.
- The provision has a wide variety of toys and resources which are stimulating, fun, interesting and provide sufficient challenge. All the equipment appears to be in good condition, safe, well maintained and appropriate for the ages of the children attending the provision. Provision is stored in large cupboards, low level shelving and stacking boxes in the premises. The children are able to reach the toys and equipment easily, sit comfortably and play safely. Children are interested and enjoy their play.

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

- a written operational plan
- staff ratios
- risk assessments

- the care of babies during bottle feeding
- the display of fire exit signs
- a written special needs policy
- the updating of policies and procedures.

### 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       |
|-----|--|------------|
| 14  | Make available to parents a written statement that provides details of the procedure to be followed if they have a complaint, including the contact details of Ofsted. | 29/02/2004 |

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

| Std | Recommendation  |
|-----|---|
| 6   | Ensure fire exits are displayed.  |
| 2   | Devise and implement a written operational plan.  |
| 2   | Ensure that staff ratios are maintained at all times.   |
| 6   | Devise and implement a risk assessment on the premises identifying action to be taken to minimize identified risks.   |
| 6   | Ensure babies are held or supervised whilst being bottle fed.   |
| 10  | Devise and make available to parents a written statement on special needs which is consistent with current legislation and guidance. Ensure that this is understood and implemented by all staff. |
| 14  | Devise and implement policies and procedures on child protection, allegations against staff, lost or non-collected children and the Curriculum.   |

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

### How effective is the nursery education?

Little Acorns day nursery provides acceptable nursery education, but has some significant areas for improvement. Children's progress towards the early learning goals is limited by some significant weaknesses. Children make generally good progress in personal, social and emotional development, knowledge and understanding of the world and physical development. There are significant weaknesses in the provision of communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and creative development.

There are significant weaknesses in the quality of teaching. Children respond well to encouragement from staff, showing high levels of concentration. However, staff's understanding of the early learning goals is limited and they are frequently unaware of the learning potential for activities which they provide. The current assessment and planning systems are ineffective and do not enable staff to deliver an early years curriculum which ensures children of all abilities make good progress towards the early learning goals.

There are significant weaknesses in the leadership and management of the nursery. Although there is a system in place for staff appraisal and development, this has proved ineffective in addressing the developmental needs of staff, who are often ill equipped to support children in their educational development. The nursery has failed to monitor its provision of nursery education, as there have been no effective assessments of children's progress during the past twelve months.

There are significant weaknesses in the partnership with parents and carers. Although staff provide a welcoming environment where parents discuss their child's day, the nursery provides no written information about the foundation stage of learning and many parents are unaware of the educational programme. Parents are not invited to view assessments, make comments or to participate in planning the next stage of development for their child.

### What is being done well?

- Staff develop good, caring relationships with children. They use praise and encouragement effectively to make all children feel valued.
- Staff create an environment where parents feel welcomed and are very comfortable discussing their child's day.
- Children's personal, social and emotional development is generally good. They are confident, develop good personal skills and are keen to try new activities.

### What needs to be improved?

- staff's knowledge and understanding of the foundation stage and how to plan and implement an effective programme of learning for children of all abilities
- assessments, to establish what children can do related to the stepping stones and whether they are making progress towards the early learning goals with opportunities for parents to contribute
- individual play plans, to detail the next stages of development for each child, which should be shared with parents
- planning, to be clearly linked to the developmental needs of the children, and to inform staff about the learning outcomes, grouping of children and staff deployment
- opportunities for children to recognise letter sounds and simple words and to practice pre-writing and writing skills
- opportunities for children to develop an understanding of simple mathematical concepts and problem solving
- opportunities for children to create pictures and models to their own designs.

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

Although the nursery fully or partially addressed the key issues raised at the previous inspection, they have not maintained the improvements and the issues are all carried forward as weaknesses in the educational provision. They were listed at the previous inspection as follows:-

1. Provide more opportunities for children to communicate their ideas in early writing.
2. Link assessments to the desirable learning outcomes and give parents opportunities to contribute to the assessments.
3. Provide more opportunities to develop the mathematical skills of problem solving and to develop understanding of simple operations.

## SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

### PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children are keen to try new activities and show initiative and high levels of concentration. They respond well to praise and encouragement from staff and have high self-esteem. They enjoy friendly, positive relationships with staff and develop good personal skills, for example, they wash their hands, pour their own drinks and select resources. Although children learn the nursery's rules, poor staff deployment means that inappropriate behaviour is not consistently addressed.

### COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Significant Weaknesses

Children's spoken language develops well. They talk about themselves and the world around them and enjoy expressing ideas through role play. Children have few opportunities to link sounds to letters or to recognise familiar words like their names. They are not provided with resources during free play to attempt writing for different purposes, for example, to make shopping lists. Children are not encouraged to develop writing skills by writing their names or other simple words.

### MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Significant Weaknesses

Children recognise numerals one to ten during everyday activities and many children count confidently to 20, for example, they count the number of children present at registration. Children use a wide range of resources, however, they are not used effectively to develop their understanding of simple mathematical concepts like addition and subtraction. Children are not routinely encouraged to solve problems or to discuss size, quantity and position.

### KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Generally Good

Children enjoy opportunities to care for pets and to grow plants in the garden. They talk about living things and how they grow. Children develop skills using information technology, for example, they have access to a range of computer programmes and play with toy mobile phones. They celebrate other cultures and use a range of attractive resources. Although children have access to a good range of construction toys, their design and making skills are not developed effectively.

### PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children use an attractive range of large outdoor equipment which provides challenging opportunities for climbing, jumping and balancing during dry weather. They demonstrate a good sense of space and move confidently during physical play. They participate enthusiastically and with imagination during music and movement. Children are skilled at using a variety of tools and materials, for example, they use scissors, paintbrushes, glue sticks and construction materials competently.

**CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

|            |                        |
|------------|------------------------|
| Judgement: | Significant Weaknesses |
|------------|------------------------|

Children enjoy participating in singing sessions and have built up a repertoire of familiar songs and rhymes. They use their imagination during music and movement sessions and during role play. Children have limited opportunities to explore their creativity, as structured art and craft activities tend to be pre-prepared, adult led and prescriptive. Children's daily experiences of smell, touch, taste and texture are seldom discussed or developed by staff.

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



## **OUTCOME OF THE INSPECTION**

The provision is acceptable but has some significant areas for improvement. Children progress towards the early learning goals is limited by some significant weaknesses. The next inspection will take place in one to two years time.

## **WHAT THE SETTING NEEDS TO DO NEXT: THE KEY ISSUES**

- devise and implement an effective system of assessment and planning to ensure all children make good progress towards the early learning goals.
- provide opportunities for children to link sounds to letters, recognise simple words and practice writing skills during everyday activities.
- improve the provision for mathematical development to enable children to understand simple concepts like addition, subtraction and measure and to encourage children to develop problem solving skills.
- enable children to develop their creative skills by providing regular opportunities for them to plan and make pictures and models to their own designs.

*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.*