



Office for Standards
in Education

NURSERY INSPECTION REPORT

URN EY136994

DfES Number: 580628

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date	15/09/2004
Inspector Name	Susan, Helen Spencer

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type	Full Day Care
Setting Name	Little Acorns Childcare Ltd
Setting Address	34 Sheep Hill Lane Clayton-le-Woods Chorley Lancashire PR6 7JH

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name	Little Acorns Childcare Ltd 4310438
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ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name	Little Acorns Childcare Ltd
Address	Le Monde Petit Bank Parade Burnley Lancashire BB11 1UG

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

Little Acorns Day Nursery opened in 1997 and operates in purpose built premises close to the M6 motorway in Clayton-le-Woods, Chorley. It is open from 07.45 to 17.45 for 50 weeks of the year. It offers full day care for children aged from birth to five years in the locality and surrounding areas.

At present there are 42 children on roll with 25 receiving nursery education grant funding for three-year olds. There are no funded four-year-olds or children learning English as an additional language within the nursery at this time. A small number of children who have been identified as having special educational needs are receiving funding.

There are two members of staff, working with the funded children, both of whom have a Level three qualification in childcare and education and a student on placement.

Lancashire's Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership give the nursery support from teachers and provide training at the nursery.

Since the last inspection there have been some significant changes in staff and management. There is a new manager and a new staff team working with the funded children who now use the first floor of the nursery for their activities.

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

How effective is the nursery education?

The educational provision at Little Acorns Nursery is acceptable but has some significant areas for improvement. Children are making generally good progress towards the early learning goals in mathematical development, physical development and creative development, however, progress in the other areas of learning is limited.

The quality of teaching has significant weaknesses. Staff management of children's behaviour and awareness of what is happening in other parts of the pre school room is inconsistent and this affects the children's ability to learn. Staff plan for each area of learning but this is not based on assessment of the children's understanding and skill and what they need to do next. Staff make good use of the resources and ideas from the speech therapist to support the progress of children with special educational needs.

The leadership and management of the nursery has some significant weaknesses. There is, however, a commitment to develop the practice. Training on assessment has been arranged through the partnership and the new manager is developing systems to monitor teaching and evaluate practice. This is insufficient at present to impact on children's learning. Staff are unsure of their roles and responsibilities, due to there being no mechanism for giving direction. This results in insufficient time spent working with the children. Resources are limited particularly in role-play and technology.

The partnership with parents has some significant weaknesses. Parents spend time talking to staff about their children and find them friendly and approachable. They have brought in items from home to share with the children but are unsure how they can be increasingly involved in the children's learning. Parents receive no formal communication of progress in children's learning and have limited information about how the nursery activities link to the Foundation Stage.

What is being done well?

- The programme for mathematical development, physical development and creative development to extend the children's learning.
- The enthusiasm and keenness of new staff and manager to developing the provision.
- The use of external agencies to support children with special educational needs, the children's inclusion in all activities and use of ideas and resources left by experts to enhance these children's learning.

What needs to be improved?

- the monitoring and evaluation of the quality of teaching to improve learning opportunities for the children
- staff's knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage Curriculum and how young children learn
- staff's management of children's behaviour
- information for parents
- resources for supporting children's learning through technology and role-play equipment.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Limited progress has been made since the last inspection. A role-play area is now available to the children but this offers little challenge because of the limited resources and lack of adult support for children in this area. Children do now have independent access to some resources such as the creative materials, construction toys and boxed resources but labelling is inconsistent in allowing the children to find the toys they want to play with, to return them after use and extend their literacy skills. Staff interaction in children's chosen activities offers insufficient challenge particularly in developing thinking skills or to solve problems such as when paper was stuck to the table. Aspects of the key issues from the last report remain an issue.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Significant Weaknesses
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The children are generally interested to learn. They meet their own hygiene needs, washing hands after playing in the sand. Children are developing concentration in their chosen activities. This is less apparent in adult led activities, which are often too long for three-year-olds. Children have limited opportunities to be independent, are not sure where to find resources or how to them. Children's behaviour is inconsistent and at times poor and little help given to understand right or wrong.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement:	Significant Weaknesses
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Children are starting to talk together. Attention span is limited and children become restless when expect to sit still too long. Their vocabulary is growing as they use words used by staff. Thinking skills are developing but are insufficiently enhanced by staff's questions. Books are generally handled well but these are largely inaccessible during play. Children are starting to recognise print. Phonetics and name recognition are emerging but there are few opportunities to write for a purpose.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children are starting to count and use number generally well talking about two friends in the water. They are aware of size and talk about a train being too long, solving this problem by taking off a section. Children are aware of capacity wanting more glue and talking about glitter pots being empty. Staff insufficiently develop opportunities for the children to recognise numerals and shape or to gain an understanding of pattern as they play alongside them.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement:	Significant Weaknesses
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Children are starting to investigate. They can recognise similarities when looking in mirrors. They talk about the past, likes and dislikes but the group size is not always appropriate. They rarely question why things happen and this is not demonstrated for them. Children make models but the range of joining materials and tools is limited. Support for learning is restricted by broken technological equipment. Children's experience of living things, the environment or culture is limited.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children generally move confidently. They are gaining control of tools and small equipment generally well. Coordination is developing appropriately through the use of bikes, scooters and space-hopper. They have limited awareness of space walking through toys on the floor and pushing on the carpet at circle time. Staff miss opportunities to develop this understanding. The children are starting to recognise changes in the body as they exercise.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT	
Judgement:	Generally Good
Children are exploring colour and texture through a range of materials, however, staff often give too much assistance and direction. Children explore sound through the use of a variety of musical instruments. They make up stories in their play with developing imagination but this is not fully developed because of the lack of dressing up clothes and props. There are few opportunities to create freely in three dimension or join using different materials.	
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's 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

- develop staff's knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum and teaching strategies including behaviour management so that children's independent learning and focus activities allow the children to progress
- ensure staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities and sufficiently briefed so that they know what is expected of them and the time they spend working with the children is maximised
- provide sufficient good quality resources and experiences to promote learning in all areas
- develop the assessment process so that it informs the next steps for children's learning
- supply parents, formally, with more information about their child's progress, how the nursery activities link to the Foundation Stage curriculum and how they can be further involved in the children's learning.

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.