



Office for Standards
in Education

COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN 148637

DfES Number: 521332

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 05/11/2003
Inspector Name Elizabeth, Claire Price

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Sessional Day Care
Setting Name ACORN UNDER-FIVES
Setting Address Oakland Infant School
Butler Road,
Crowthorne
Berkshire
RG45 6QZ

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name The Committee of Acorn Under Fives 295296

ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name Acorn Under Fives
Address Oakland Infant School
Butler Road,
Crowthorne
Berkshire
RG45 6QZ

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

Acorn Under Fives opened in 1986. It operates from a purpose built building within the grounds of Oakland Infant School in a residential area of Crowthorne. The group serves the local area and has a fully enclosed area available for outside play.

There are currently 57 children from age two to five years on roll. This includes 30 funded three-year-olds and 17 funded four-year-olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting caters for children with special educational needs, and children who speak English as an additional language.

The group opens five days a week during school term times and on limited days during the summer holidays. Sessions are from 09:00 am until 12:00 in term time and holidays and from 13:00 pm until 15:30 pm in term time only. The session on Friday afternoon is only available during the second half of each term and caters for children starting school in the next term. Six staff work with the children. Over half the staff have early years qualifications to Level three.

Acorn Under Fives is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance. The setting receives support from a mentor from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP).

How good is the Day Care?

Acorn under Fives provides good quality care for children. The staff are well organised and operate a high adult to child ratio, which enables close attention to the children's needs. Staff follow an induction process and are encouraged to undertake training. Toys and resources provide a good range for the children attending. All resources are readily available to children for self-selection with free access to alternatives. Most documentation is available although some required elements are not included.

Staff give high priority to children's safety and carry out regular checks to ensure children's health and safety. Staff work alone during parts of the session to provide a

wider choice to the children. This has not yet been risk assessed. They encourage children to be aware of personal hygiene and develop independence in their personal care. Parents and children's preferences are observed and healthy and nutritious snacks with drinks are provided. The staff team provides good support for children with additional needs and all children are treated with equal concern.

The staff organise and plan a good range of interesting and stimulating activities for the children. The children approach adults readily for help and information and co-operate well with staff and each other. Staff interact well with the children and respond promptly to their requests. Key worker staff record observations of children's play and learning. Staff have effective strategies to manage children's behaviour. They are consistent and caring, using praise and encouragement appropriately.

Parents are welcomed in the group and encouraged to discuss their child's progress with staff. Daily and regular verbal feedback is provided and parents are encouraged to view their child's record. Parents are provided with most policies and procedures at registration and receive an informative handbook.

What has improved since the last inspection?

The last inspection was for registration of the new premises and no actions were imposed.

What is being done well?

- Children are interested, entertained and keen to participate in activities throughout the session. They approach adults readily for help and information and co-operate well with staff and each other. There is a good balance of activities available with a wide choice for children and staff use good questioning techniques to extend children's play. Staff provide excellent opportunities for children to develop their independent play and support children well if needed.
- A very good selection of resources and activities are available to children at each session . These are all stored accessibly and available for self-selection.
- Staff have effective strategies to attract children's attention and divert them from unwanted behaviour. Children respond well to staff and are co-operative, enthusiastic and well behaved.
- Staff are consistent and use praise and encouragement appropriately to develop the children's self esteem and foster good behaviour patterns.
- The partnership with parents works well and good relationships are developed. Parents feel
- welcome and involved in their child's care. Verbal feedback is available on a regular basis and parents can speak to their child's key worker to discuss any concerns or requests for information. The parents' committee is an integral part of the smooth running of the group.

What needs to be improved?

- documentation to provide contact details for Ofsted to parents should they wish to make a complaint and to include a statement of the procedure to follow if an allegation of abuse or neglect is received
- the policies and procedures to refer to Ofsted as the regulatory body
- the availability to parents of the policy for late collection of their child and procedure in the event of a child becoming lost
- risk assessment of staff deployment to ensure the staff are aware of any possible risks when working alone with children.

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
6	Ensure risk assessments are carried out to take account of staff working in the garden and the small room.
12	Make available to parents a written statement of the procedure to be followed if they have a complaint that includes contact details for Ofsted including address and telephone number.
13	Ensure that the child protection procedure for the group includes details of procedures to be followed in case of allegations of abuse or neglect.
14	Ensure all policies and documentation refer to Ofsted as the regulatory body.

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

How effective is the nursery education?

Acorn Under Fives offers good quality provision which helps children make generally good progress towards the early learning goals. Children have positive attitudes to learning and progress through a wide range of resources and activities available to them. Children make very good progress in three of the six areas of learning, personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy and creative development.

Teaching is generally good. Staff have a sound knowledge of the Foundation Stage shown by the activities planned and observed, planning documents and through discussions with staff. The key strengths in three areas of learning derive from the high level of interaction, conversation with the children, wide variety of resources and planned activities. Observations of children's learning are recorded, although these do not include details of a child's developmental needs or plans for their progress. Staff have high expectations of children's behaviour and encourage children to share and co-operate. Relationships between staff and children are very good. Children with special educational needs are well supported and strategies are in place to provide support for children with English as an additional language.

Leadership and management are generally good. The committee and staff work well as a team and are committed to ongoing professional development and continued improvement in the quality of education provided. Staff induction, meetings and appraisals provide regular opportunities for development.

The partnership with parents is generally good and contributes to the children's progress towards the early learning goals. Parents are kept informed verbally about their child's time at nursery, their activities and progress. They are encouraged to involve themselves and share observations with staff and are welcome to discuss their child's progress with the key worker.

What is being done well?

- Relationships and behaviour are very good with effective strategies for positive behaviour management with praise and encouragement to develop and foster children's self esteem.
- The well organised provision of a wide range and balance of resources and activities freely accessible to the children allowing development of independence. The staff take advantage of opportunities as they arise to further promote children's learning.
- Partnership with parents which ensures parents are kept informed of their child's progress and development. This contributes to the child's progress and encourages parents to involve themselves and share their observations which promotes good communication.

- The provision of a wide range of creative resources and free access to the outdoor environment stimulates children's interest and promotes exploration and investigation of their environment.

What needs to be improved?

- the evaluation and planning of activities to include planning for children's individual progress and reflect extension activities provided for more able children
- the use of opportunities available to promote the use of simple calculation in everyday situations
- opportunities for children to discuss and develop awareness of their environment for example the weather, seasons and sense of time
- planning to detail the range of activities provided for physical play, resources used and evaluation of the learning outcomes.

What has improved since the last inspection?

The setting has made generally good progress since the last inspection.

The group have made significant progress in communication, language and literacy and mathematics. Children's learning is well supported and a range of activities are provided daily to cater for individual children's needs and abilities. Staff have introduced a wide range of topics to provide more opportunities for children to explore their environment and question how things work. They have also included a wider range of cultural celebrations in the planning over a two-year cycle to support children's learning.

Curriculum planning and assessment are still under development. Staff are assessing and developing their planning and evaluation for its success. They plan changes to ensure all areas of the early learning goals are covered and expected children's learning is detailed.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children are keen, interested and enthusiastic to share news with everyone and to take part in the wide range of activities available. They co-operate well with staff, work well independently and in small groups and are confident to select resources for themselves. Staff form good relationships with the children and show kindness, respect and consideration for their feelings. Children behave well and respond to the effective methods used for positive behaviour management.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Very Good

Children engage adults and each other in conversation in small or large groups and are eager to share their news at circle times. They confidently find their name cards, recognise letters and enjoy books at story time and individually. Staff utilise and respond to opportunities as they arise to develop children's reading and provide facilities and readily accessible resources to encourage children's emergent writing. Children's vocabulary is developed with good questioning and active listening.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Most children are able to count up to and beyond ten and some recognise numerals up to and beyond nine. They apply mathematical skills during play and count independently. Children enjoy number rhymes and counting in arranged activities for example on the computer and at circle time. There are missed opportunities for simple calculations in everyday situations for example number of girls and boys. The good range of activities provided helps to develop children's mathematical skills.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Generally Good

Children explore and investigate using a wide range of activities, which promote the use of their senses and provide first hand experiences. Children talk confidently about events in their lives for example holidays during half term, trip on a train and have regular use of technology with a computer and educational programmes. There are missed opportunities to utilise available resources for children to develop and discuss awareness of their environment, weather and seasons.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children demonstrate good co-ordination and confidence in movement and awareness of space. They utilise the garden well and are enthusiastic about outdoor activities. Children are confident in their personal care and show an awareness of healthy eating and good hygiene. They have easy access to a wide range of tools, construction and malleable materials which develop their skills. Planning and evaluation of the outdoor provision lacks sufficient detail of activities provided and resources used.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children are offered daily access to a wide range of media and materials both indoors and out enabling them to explore and develop their skills. They respond with enthusiasm to opportunities offered to express themselves through music making, dressing up and role play in the home corner. Children are enthusiastic about music and enjoy singing familiar songs and rhymes.

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 opportunities are fully utilised for children to develop and discuss awareness of their environment and sense of time;
- develop the evaluation and planning of activities to include planning for children's individual progress and reflect extension activities provided for more able children;
- ensure opportunities for children to use number and simple calculation are utilised in everyday situations.

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.