



Office for Standards  
in Education

## NURSERY INSPECTION REPORT

URN 303430

DfES Number: 541512

### INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 14/02/2004  
Inspector Name Susan, Helen Spencer

### SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Full Day Care  
Setting Name Acorn Community Nursery  
Setting Address Kingshead Close  
Castlefields  
Runcorn  
Cheshire  
WA7 2JE

### REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name Astmoor Community Project Ltd 03978603

### ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name Astmoor Community Project Ltd  
Address Kingshead Close  
Castlefields  
Runcorn  
WA7 2JE

## 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

Acorn Day Nursery opened in 2000 and is situated in a refurbished infant's school in the Castlefields area of Runcorn. It serves the local area. The children are cared for in rooms according to their age, and also have access to an outdoor play area.

There are currently 81 children from 0 to 5 years on roll. This includes 20 funded 3 year olds and four funded 4 year olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting currently supports a number of children with special needs and who speak English as an additional language.

The group opens five days a week all year round. Sessions are from 07:30 until 18:30.

Sixteen full-time and two part-time staff work with the children as well as 3 supply staff. All staff have early years qualifications to NVQ level 2 or 3. The setting receives support from a teacher from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership.

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

### How effective is the nursery education?

Acorn Community Nursery provides high quality education which enables children to make very good progress towards the early learning goals in all six learning areas.

The quality of teaching is very good. The adults manage the children's behaviour well and have close, warm relationships with them. There is much lively conversation and adults question and comment, encouraging the children to think. They plan and organise a good variety of stimulating activities. The environment is well-organised, rich in print and inviting. The outdoor area is used very effectively to encourage both the development of physical skills, and knowledge of the natural world. The children are learning well in the large group activities, but sometimes these are too long for some children to concentrate effectively.

The provision for children with special needs is very good indeed. The special educational needs coordinator is very well-informed, and has developed practical, useful individual learning plans for the children. Parents, staff and outside agencies have all been involved in the process of assessing the children's needs, and this is leading to the provision of very good learning experiences for the children. Staff focus on the early learning goals and stepping stones when planning, assessing and recording the children's progress.

The leadership and management of the nursery is very good. There is a good sense of teamwork led by a manager who is committed to developing good practice. Staff regularly attend courses and training events, and have visited other nurseries in order to share and develop ideas for more effective teaching and learning.

The partnership with parents is very good. Parents clearly value the relationship they have with the staff, and the opportunities to talk with key workers each day. Records are easily accessible and parents are able to add comments about their children's progress. They support their learning at home with suggestions from staff.

### What is being done well?

- Staff are every good at encouraging the children's language. They clearly value what the children have to say and give them time to talk about their everyday activities and what interests them. The children respond with enthusiasm, stimulated by questions and comments which extend their learning. Staff display the children's work including records of the children's language and ideas, which they use very effectively to stimulate further discussion and learning.
- Children with special educational needs are very well supported in the nursery. Staff work in partnership with parents, carers and outside agencies to find out about the specific needs of each child. They provide appropriate activities and support to enable children to learn and develop, making good

use of individual learning plans.

- The staff use the extensive outdoor area very effectively to promote children's physical skills. Children explore, investigate and examine the natural world in the wild garden, using appropriate tools to support their learning. They also make good use of an indoor hall and good quality equipment to improve their climbing and balancing skills.
- The manager of the nursery is fully involved in the day to day running of the nursery. She provides strong support for a staff committed to improving the care and education of the children. The staff are keen to attend courses such as Attention and Listening Skills in order to develop the curriculum.
- Parents and staff have good relationships, and regularly talk about the children's progress and any concerns they might have. Records are easily available and can be taken home to share with other members of the family. Children take home Freddie the Fox and Travelling Ted so that parents can be practically involved in their learning.

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

- the structure of large groups to ensure that all children can sustain their interest and learning.

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

Not applicable

## SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

### PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children are confident in their relationships with adults and each other. They are cheerful, inquisitive and motivated to learn. They behave well, responding to good management by the adults. They concentrate well, but sometimes large group activities are too long for some children. There is a clear sense of their own and wider community as they invite people who help them into the nursery, such as a policeman. A 'Feed the World' project demonstrates their concern for others less fortunate.

### COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Very Good

Children talk happily and animatedly about their experience such as a trip to the library and holidays. They question and comment about what they are learning and observing. They are interested in labels and comments on displays recognising their own words. They enjoy looking at books and listening to stories, and tell their own adventures of Freddie the Fox and Travelling Ted. They learn about the purpose of writing in the Chinese Take-Away role play area and using the office area.

### MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children are developing very good skills of counting and recognising numbers up to ten. Their understanding is reinforced when they count how many mugs for snack and how many at a table for lunch. They learn about capacity when pouring and scooping in water play. They weigh and measure during cooking activities, and compare heights of vegetables which they have planted. They are beginning to learn about simple subtraction when they enjoy singing Five Little Men in Their Flying Saucers.

### KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Very Good

The children enjoy exploring, observing and examining the natural world in their wild garden. They are curious, and question how things work when they use magnets and iron filings in the discovery area. They learn about the local environment when they take bus trips over the bridge, and go to the local library. Children are learning good construction skills as they make Chinese dragons and use the tools at the work bench.

**PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children move energetically, confidently and with good coordination outdoors. They climb on the pirate ship, manage very well on the rope ladders and enjoy balancing on planks. Staff support the children well, encouraging them to be adventurous in their play. Indoors a parachute provides many good learning opportunities, and they enjoy using bats, balls and rockers in the hall. Children are taught to use tools carefully, and can handle hammers, cutlery and paint brushes with increasing control.

**CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children explore colour and texture when they make dragons for Chinese New Year, using vibrant collage materials and paint. They use their imagination in the role play areas, using a wide variety of dressing up clothes, and playing in the baby clinic or hairdressers. They move to simple rhythms outdoors, marching quickly or slowly to the beat of the tambour. Indoors they make their own music using a range of instruments, and choosing bells to accompany Twinkle Twinkle Little Star.

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

### **OUTCOME OF THE INSPECTION**

The provision is acceptable and is of high quality. Children are making very 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**

*There are no significant weaknesses to report, but considerations should be given to improving the following:*

- There are no significant weaknesses to report, but consideration should be given to improve the following:
- review the structure of large group activities to ensure that all children can sustain interest and concentration.

*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.*