



**Office for Standards
in Education**

COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN EY218724

DfES Number: 538273

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 17/10/2003
Inspector Name Christine McInally

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Full Day Care
Setting Name The Acorns Nursery School
Setting Address Westmeston Parish Hall
 Lewes Road, Westmeston
 Hassocks
 East Sussex
 BN6 8RL

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name Mrs Janet Irwin

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

The Acorns Nursery School was established by Janet Irwin, a qualified teacher, in her own home in Lindfield in 1985, where it still operates Monday to Thursday during term times only.

The Acorns Nursery School at Westmeston offers an extended day from 9 am - 5pm on a Friday for up to 24 children aged 3 and 4. There are currently three children on roll and of these one is a funded four-year-old. There are no children identified as having special needs nor any with English as an additional language. The nursery school occupies the Parish Hall in Westmeston and is in a very rural location, situated on the Ditchling to Lewes Road, near to Plumpton College. Children have access to a large main hall, a smaller room, toilet and hand washing facilities and the use of a secure outdoor area with large areas of grass and tarmac. A cooked lunch, morning snack and afternoon tea is provided.

A special feature of the day's programme at Westmeston is the planned outings into the surrounding countryside. Children are introduced to French and other languages when appropriate.

How good is the Day Care?

The standard of quality and care at The Acorns Nursery School is good. The nursery is extremely well organised and staff work well together as a team. There is an excellent operational plan in place which helps guide the staff in their daily practice. Good safety measures are in place and children are safe and well cared for.

The nursery provides a very warm, child friendly environment where children are happy and settled. The nursery organises the space and resources well, children confidently choose resources and activities by themselves. The staff form warm caring relationships with the children; they provide a wide range of worthwhile, interesting and stimulating activities, children are well motivated to learn.

The nursery has an effective relationship with parents and actively encourages

involvement in their child's learning. They are provided with useful information about the nursery. The regular exchange of information, on children's progress ensures that their individual needs are well met. All the relevant paperwork is place; the nursery maintains records, policies and procedures well.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Not applicable.

What is being done well?

- Staff know the children well, they spend time talking and playing with them. Children happily engage in activities and are well motivated to learn.
- Children are happy and confident they enjoy using the excellent range of toys and resources available to them.
- A stimulating range of interesting topics and activities are provided and children are making good progress in all areas of development.
- The local environment is very well used, children enjoy the regular outings to the Downs and learn a great deal about the world around them.
- The excellent operational plan demonstrates very clearly that the owner and staff have a very good working knowledge of the Standards.
- Children are safe and well cared for.

An aspect of outstanding practice:

The emphasis given by all staff to the importance of children's early learning and development. This is demonstrated in the children's record books, which include examples of their work from home and nursery, building into a complete record of their achievements while at the nursery.

What needs to be improved?

- minor aspect of paperwork.

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	Include in the record of fire drills how many children and adults are present and how long it takes to evacuate the building.

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

How effective is the nursery education?

The provision for nursery education at The Acorns Nursery School is generally good. It enables children to make very good progress towards the Early Learning Goals in Personal & Social development, Language, Literacy and Knowledge & Understanding of the World and generally good progress in all other areas of learning.

The overall quality of the teaching is generally good. Staff have a good knowledge and understanding of the Early Learning goals and this is reflected in the planning. Resources are of a good quality and children receive a balanced range of activities to support their learning. Children can choose resources for themselves and the development of their personal independence is actively encouraged by staff.

The leadership and management of the setting is generally good, with the owner and staff confident in their ability to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the learning programme. The owner and staff have developed good relationships and are committed to the improvement of care and education for all children. A clear and well organised system is in place to help staff evaluate and review the effectiveness of the nursery school's practice.

The partnership with parents is very good. They receive written guidance on each term's early learning themes and are encouraged to participate. Each child has a record book that both staff and parents contribute to and parents receive information daily on their children's progress towards the early learning goals.

What is being done well?

- Children's communication, language and literacy is well developed. They are confident speakers and use language creatively.
- Children are encouraged to explore and investigate and extend their learning. They develop a good understanding of growth, nature and natural surroundings by regular walks in the country-side.
- Children's physical and expressive skills are effectively promoted through a range of indoor and outdoor activities.

What needs to be improved?

- opportunities to develop basic counting skills and to explore taste and texture in everyday activities.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Not applicable.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children are making very good progress in this area. Children arrive happily and are interested and motivated to learn. They build good relationships which are supported by staff. Children's behaviour is very good with staff able to provide a good range of activities, where children can self select, work independently and express their ideas.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Very Good

Children are making very good progress in this area of learning. Children speak confidently to adults and others, with staff providing many opportunities to develop and extend language and literacy skills. Books, poems and stories feature strongly in the planning and children are interested in learning and using new words.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children are making generally good progress in mathematical development. Staff encourage the children to investigate and solve simple mathematical problems, through some good resources and well prepared practical activities. Staff encourage the children with their understanding of addition and subtraction, but some opportunities are missed to count during everyday activities.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Very Good

Children's progress in this area is very good. Staff provide plenty of opportunities for children to explore, investigate and identify features of the local and wider world. Children are able to investigate a variety of different materials and substances, with staff active in encouraging children to recognise similarities and differences and be confident with information and communication technology.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

The programme for physical development is generally good. Children have opportunities to use small and large equipment, with balls, hoops, scooters and bikes. The nursery is well resourced with games materials and opportunities for physical play varied according to the termly plan. Children are challenged to develop new skills and move around with confidence and a good awareness of others.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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The programme for creative development is generally good. Children enter enthusiastically into role play and express and communicate their ideas well. There is a well planned range of activities to develop imagination, design and music, but staff miss some opportunities to ask questions about texture and taste in everyday activities. Staff encourage the children to communicate their thoughts and feelings, often using the children's ideas to extend learning.

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

- improve the staff's awareness of opportunities to develop basic counting and to explore taste and texture in everyday activities.

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.