



Office for Standards
in Education

COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN 109949

DfES Number: 520050

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 03/12/2003
Inspector Name Heather Fletcher

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Sessional Day Care
Setting Name ACORNWOOD PRE-SCHOOL
Setting Address 8 Southwood Village Centre, Links Way
Farnborough
Hampshire
GU14 0NA

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name ACORNWOOD PRE-SCHOOL 1074102

ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name ACORNWOOD PRE-SCHOOL
Address 8 Southwood Village Centre, Links Way
Farnborough
Hampshire
GU14 0NA

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

Acornwood Pre-School opened in 1987. It operates from within the local Southwood Community Centre, in Farnborough, Hants. The group has the use of the main hall, with two smaller rooms and an enclosed outdoor patio area. The Pre-School serves children from the local community.

There are currently 30 children aged from 2 to 5 years on roll, although children do not normally attend before the age of two years and nine months. This includes eleven funded 3 year olds and five funded 4 year olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting supports children with special needs, although none attend currently. There are children attending who speak English as an additional language.

The group opens 5 days a week during term time. Sessions run from 09:30 to 12:00 on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays and from 12:30 to 15:00 on Fridays.

Six experienced staff work with the children. Four staff work part-time. Two full-time staff are qualified in Early Years Care and Education, and two part-time staff intend shortly to begin work towards a recognised Early Years qualification. The setting receives support from a teacher/mentor from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership [EYDCP].

How good is the Day Care?

Acornwood Pre-School provides satisfactory quality care for children. Staff are long established, however additional staff training is necessary to ensure appropriate qualified staff ratios are maintained at all times. The setting is well organised, and staff are clear about their daily responsibilities. Children have plenty of space to play and learn. The environment is welcoming with colourful displays of children's work, but improved lighting levels in the 'quiet' area would help children to concentrate better. Policies and procedures support the effective management of the setting, although some revision and updating is required in certain areas.

Staff are vigilant about children's safety, and they promote good health and hygiene practices. Children learn about how to eat healthily and the way in which their bodies work. Toys and activities reflect positive images of other people in society. Staff work closely with parents to support children with special needs, and plans are adapted if necessary to ensure all children are able to participate.

There is a good range of quality toys and resources, which support children's learning and development in all areas. Children are able to choose 'quiet' tabletop activities, or 'busy' activities such as large-scale floor construction, dressing up or home corner play. Children are encouraged to be responsible and independent, and they access a drink of water or a paper tissue, and visit the toilet without assistance. Good behaviour is valued, and staff remind children to share and be kind. Self-esteem is fostered through praise and encouragement.

There are good relationships with parents, who are given high quality information about the provision and their children's activities and achievements. They are encouraged to take an active role by donating resources. The regular informal exchange of information between pre-school and home before and after sessions, and in the 'Contact' books, benefits children.

What has improved since the last inspection?

The last inspection was a transitional inspection, and did not highlight areas for improvement.

What is being done well?

- Staff provide a wide range of toys and resources which support children's development in all areas, and space is used imaginatively to allow children to explore different kinds of activities, for example 'quiet' table top crafts or physical play on the slide.
- Staff act as sound role models to encourage good behaviour, and self-esteem is fostered through praise and encouragement. Children learn to be responsible and to have regard for the feelings of others.
- There are good relationships with parents, who receive quality information about the provision and their children's activities and achievements. Children benefit from the effective regular two-way communication, which exists between home and pre-school.

What needs to be improved?

- staff training, to ensure that a minimum of half the staff on duty at any one time are suitably qualified.
- lighting levels in the 'quiet' area, to assist children's concentration levels.
- documentation, to ensure that : registration system clearly shows times at which staff and children arrive and depart; a written record of all visitors is

maintained ; accidents/incidents are recorded separately to maintain confidentiality ; complaints procedure refers to Ofsted ; all policies and procedures are reviewed and updated in line with the requirements of the National Standards, and references to previous Social Services requirements are removed.

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 should have regard to the following recommendations by the time of the next inspection

Std	Recommendation
2	ensure additional staff training proceeds as planned.
4	improve level of lighting in 'quiet' area to assist children's concentration.
14	ensure documentation is reviewed and updated

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

How effective is the nursery education?

Acornwood Pre-School offers good quality nursery education, where children make generally good progress towards the early learning goals.

Teaching is generally good. Staff provide a range of interesting activities and resources to support children's development in all areas, and are deployed well to assist the children's learning. Staff act as sound role models to instil courtesy and consideration for others, and children behave well in response to the praise and encouragement which they receive. However, there are some missed opportunities at times to challenge the children's thinking through the use of more open questioning techniques. Short term curriculum planning, activity evaluations, and child observation systems are not efficient, and therefore staff are currently unable to plan effectively for what individual children need to achieve next.

The leadership and management of the setting is generally good. The long established staff members are mutually supportive, and everyone is clear about their roles and responsibilities. The two joint supervisors are able to assess strengths and weaknesses within the Pre-School, and are taking action to remedy the two main current problems, namely the lack of qualified staff, and ineffective recording and assessment systems.

There is a very good partnership with parents and carers. The setting recognises parents as their children's primary educators, and they are encouraged to play an active part within the Pre-School, by helping out, joining the committee or donating resources. Children benefit from the informal exchange of information between home and school which takes place at the beginning and end of sessions, and through written entries in the child's 'contact' book.

What is being done well?

- Children show confidence and independence within the environment. They chat readily with adults and each other, collaborate well during activities, and show concentration and perseverance.
- Children respond positively to the praise and encouragement which they receive from staff. They behave well and show consideration for others.
- Children experiment with a range of different activities which support their learning across all six areas of the curriculum, and the environment is organised imaginatively to allow children to access resources and materials.
- Children benefit from the strong partnership which exists between home and Pre-School.

What needs to be improved?

- opportunities to develop children's thinking through the introduction of more open questioning techniques by staff
- planning, observation and assessment systems, to ensure that staff are able to accurately identify what individual children can do, and what they need to achieve next.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Overall there has been generally good progress since the last inspection. The setting has made very good progress in response to the first key issue, which was raised at the last inspection. The setting has provided greater opportunities for children to develop independent language and literacy skills, by encouraging children to talk at circle and story time, developing role plays within the setting and providing opportunities for different writing activities, such as 'Bettie's' diary.

The setting has made more limited progress with regard to the second key issue, which was raised, relating to the effectiveness of the assessment procedure. A key worker system operates to ensure all children are included in all activities, but informal observations do not effectively feed through to inform short term curriculum planning, and child observation and assessment systems are not efficient. The joint supervisors acknowledge that this is still a weak area, and they are intending to introduce a new commercially produced assessment system in the New Year.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children are interested and motivated to learn, for example when introduced to a new computer programme. They show independence within the environment, for example when visiting the toilet or helping themselves to a drink from the water dispenser. Staff form warm relationships with the children and good behaviour is encouraged by being considerate and sensitive to the feelings of others. Children show concentration and perseverance during activities such as making jigsaws and building towers.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Generally Good

Children use speech to organise their thoughts when describing real or imaginary experiences. They are extending their vocabulary and make comparisons using imagery such as 'red like fire'. Children enjoy looking at books, sharing stories with friends and listening to stories. They know that print is read from left to right and that words convey meaning. 'Bertie's' diary provides opportunities for emergent writing skills. There are some missed opportunities to develop children's phonic awareness.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children count confidently during games, and they recognise numerals. They add up the number when two dice are thrown. Children talk about shape and size when constructing, and order items correctly. They are beginning to use the mathematical names for 2 and 3D shapes, and choose appropriate pieces to assist their model making. There are some missed opportunities to develop mathematical understanding during practical activities such as dividing up a playdough 'cake' into equal pieces.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Generally Good

Children design, construct and investigate using a range of different materials, and they are able to follow simple programme instructions using a computer. They show interest in their community and in the lives of people they know, and are beginning to differentiate between past and present. Children talk about significant events, such as Christmas, and understand the customs which are associated with different festivals.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children move confidently around the hall, adjusting their speed or direction to avoid obstacles. They allow each other room to manoeuvre safely and respect the personal space of others when sitting together at group time or when forming a line. Children understand that physical exercise makes them hot. They are learning about how our bodies work, and are developing good hygiene practices. Children throw and catch, and show increasing control when manipulating with small items such as scissors.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children experiment to create different textures. They design and construct using a variety of rigid and malleable materials, and discuss colour and shape. Children are building up a repertoire of songs, and they use movements and gestures to accentuate repeated rhythms. They play together imaginatively and assign role plays to introduce stories and develop narratives.

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

- provide opportunities to develop children's thinking through the introduction of more open questioning techniques by staff.
- implement effective planning, observation and assessment systems, to ensure that staff are able to accurately identify what individual children can do, and what they need to achieve next.

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.