



Office for Standards
in Education

NURSERY INSPECTION REPORT

URN 507856

DfES Number: 517843

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date	15/10/2004
Inspector Name	Marilyn Joy

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type	Full Day Care
Setting Name	Acorns Community Pre-School
Setting Address	Hanover Hall Jennings Road, Totton Southampton Hampshire SO40 3BA

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name	The Committee of Acorns Playgroup
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ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name	Acorns Playgroup
Address	Hanover Hall, Jennings Road Totton Southampton Hampshire SO40 3BA

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

Acorns Community Pre-school opened in 1989. It is managed by a voluntary committee of parents and carers and operates from a community hall in the centre of the town. The pre-school serves the local area.

There are currently 36 children on roll. There are 23 funded three-year-olds and no funded four-year-olds. There are 2 children with special educational needs and none with English as an additional language. Children attend for a variety of sessions.

The pre-school opens five days a week during school term time. Sessions are from 09:30 until 14:30.

There are currently six members of staff working with the children. There are two with early years qualifications and one who is currently working towards a relevant qualification. A training programme is in place for all staff. The pre-school receives support 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?

Acorns Community Pre-school provides good quality nursery education overall which enables children to make generally good progress towards the early learning goals in all areas.

The quality of teaching is generally good. An enthusiastic staff team work well together to provide a friendly and inviting indoor environment for children's learning. They use varied teaching methods and are involved in children's play. Key staff have a good knowledge of the early learning goals whereas others are unsure of the stepping stones and how to use them. The co-ordinator for special educational needs supports children well. A varied programme of activities is planned and a wide range of resources is rotated to stimulate children's interest and provide challenges in most areas. Weekly planning includes the areas of learning although not in detail. It does not include the afternoon sessions. The system for assessment is currently being developed as it does not contain sufficient information to plan for individual progression and regular observations have not been carried out. Staff are deployed effectively and manage behaviour well.

Leadership and management is generally good. The leader has a clear vision for future development. She provides effective support for staff and gives a strong emphasis to working as a team. Staff are keen to develop their skills with further training. The leader is aware of key areas for improvement although the committee does not have a clear system in place for monitoring the quality of the provision.

Partnership with parents is generally good. Parents are provided with a variety of information about the pre-school and its routines and are kept up-to-date with regular newsletters and the notice board. Formal and informal methods are used to exchange information with parents, although some would like more details of their child's progress and achievements. Parents value the friendly and approachable staff.

What is being done well?

- Strong leadership on a daily basis has a positive impact on developing the provision and providing a learning environment where children feel confident and secure.
- Staff use effective strategies to manage children's behaviour. They provide positive role models and use clear and consistent boundaries to encourage acceptable behaviour. Children respond well.
- An exciting range of resources is available to engage children's interest. They can easily be adapted to suit children learning at different levels. Attractive displays of children's work decorate the room and provide a welcoming environment to encourage learning.

- Parents are encouraged to be involved in children's learning either through joining the parent rota or sharing books at home. Each week children select a book to take home and read with their parents.

What needs to be improved?

- the system for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the provision for nursery education
- staffs' knowledge and understanding of the early goals
- planning to ensure all areas of learning are given equal emphasis
- the system for assessment to ensure regular observations are carried out and assessments of children's progress are used to plan their progression.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Generally good progress has been made since the last inspection when the pre-school was asked to increase staff knowledge of how to adapt challenging activities to help all children develop understanding at their own level. Experienced staff have a clear understanding of how to adapt and modify activities to suit different children. A training programme is organised for less experienced staff to develop their skills and understanding.

The pre-school was also asked to ensure there is a consistent use of letter sounds in conjunction with letter names. Contact has been made with the local schools to ensure the pre-school is working towards a similar programme for sounds and letters.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Most children arrive confidently. They are interested in the activities available and many are beginning to concentrate well. Children are becoming aware of the rules and routines of the setting and most behave well. They form sociable relationships with staff and each other. Children are encouraged to be independent in some areas for example they prepare their own snack, but some opportunities are missed such as getting ready for outdoor play and selecting resources.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children are becoming confident communicators. Many initiate conversations with others, listen attentively and contribute at circle time. There is a good range of books and displays are clearly labelled. Children are becoming aware that print has meaning and handle books well, however planned activities to introduce letters and letter sounds are not always carried out. Children engage in a variety of activities to promote their pre-writing skills and many attempt writing during their play.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children are interested in number activities and join in enthusiastically with number rhymes. Many recognise numbers and accurately count up to 5. Some are beginning to compare and solve simple problems when playing maths games. Mathematical concepts are introduced into many activities although they are not always extended for the more able. Children are becoming aware of size and shape and are beginning to use the language in their play.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children are interested in the world around them. They investigate how things change when cooking and talk about living things when exploring colours and patterns. They use technology during role-play and perform simple functions on the computer. Staff encourage them to talk about their experiences but there are few planned opportunities to learn about their community and the environment. Children demonstrate increasing skill in constructing models and using a tools to join, shape and assemble.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children are developing spatial awareness and learn to negotiate a safe pathway particularly when playing in confined spaces outdoors. They learn to move with control and co-ordination. Organisation of outdoor play is not always effective which results in some learning opportunities being missed. Children are developing healthy routines and learn about how their body works. They handle a wide variety of tools and equipment for cutting, joining and shaping with increasing skill.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children are encouraged to be creative and express themselves freely. They use a range of media and materials to create 2D and 3D models, make large pictures and explore colour. Children enjoy imaginative play. They imitate what adults do, enthusiastically create their own storyline and play co-operatively. The role-play area is imaginatively presented encompassing numbers and writing, however it is not available during all sessions. They enjoy singing and explore sound and rhythm regularly.

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

- develop a system for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the provision for nursery education
- continue to develop staffs' knowledge and understanding of the early goals to fully support children's learning in all areas
- develop the system for planning to ensure all areas of learning are given equal emphasis at each session and the outdoor area is used effectively
- improve the system for assessment to ensure regular observations are carried out and assessments of children's progress are used to plan their progression.

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.