



Office for Standards
in Education

COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN 220227

DfES Number: 582420

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date	26/07/2004
Inspector Name	Rachael Mankiewicz

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type	Full Day Care
Setting Name	Acorn Day Nursery (Brafield On The Green)
Setting Address	Church Lane Brafield on the Green Northamptonshire NN7 1BA

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name	Acorn Childcare Ltd 2561855
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ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name	Acorn Childcare Ltd
Address	17 South Street Castlethorpe Milton Keynes Buckinghamshire MK19 7EL

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 Day Nursery, Brayfield On The Green, is part of Acorn Childcare Ltd. The nursery has been open since 1997 and operates in the old village school. There are three playrooms, and an enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 35 children on roll. This includes 15 funded three year olds and 11 funded four year olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions but most attend full time. Staff are able to support children with special needs and those with English as an additional language.

The nursery opens Monday to Friday, 51 weeks of the year, excluding bank holidays. Sessions are from 08.00 to 18.00. There are twelve staff who are managed by a suitably qualified and experienced person-in-charge. Nine of the staff hold relevant early years childcare qualifications at Level 3, with another at Level 2. A further person assists with the programmed swimming trips each Wednesday morning. Music, dance and French teachers also visit the nursery. A qualified and experienced cook and other domestic staff are also employed. The setting receives support from a teacher from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership.

How good is the Day Care?

Acorn Day Nursery (Brayfield On The Green) provides care for children which is of good quality. The premises are safe and well-maintained, both indoors and outside. Record keeping is of a generally good standard based on an operational plan which works well in practice. Procedures for deputising are effective and good use is made of staff, space and other resources.

Staff and management have a good awareness of health and safety issues, and encourage children to learn good hygiene practices. Risk assessments continue to be reviewed in the light of changes of personnel.

There is a good range of toys, resources and activities to meet the needs of the different ages of the children and their stages of development. Staff are able to support the needs of individual children and encourage them in their personal interests. The behaviour of the children is very good with methods in place, if needed, for dealing with behaviour. These are sensitive and age-appropriate but the statement regarding behaviour management lacks some detail.

Staff have a good awareness of the importance of working in partnership with parents and carers. Information is shared at the end of the session and shared paperwork is reviewed on a regular basis.

What has improved since the last inspection?

At the last inspection, the management agreed to amend three administrative issues. These have all been addressed and help to ensure the clarity of procedures, which in turn ensure the welfare of children.

What is being done well?

- The management and staff have a good awareness of safety issues that ensures the children are safe and secure when indoors and outside. Security is good, and risk assessments are regularly reviewed. Health and hygiene practices are good, with children being encouraged to think about health and hygiene, including healthy eating at the nursery.
- There are good staff : child ratios with knowledgeable staff well aware of the individual needs of children. The children benefit from the good attention and the encouragement to learn through play. A positive attitude is shown to children with special needs and appropriate care is provided for them.
- There is a balanced range of toys, resources and activities which meet the needs of the different age groups of children. The under-twos and the pre-school children particularly benefit from the good planning and assessment, which promotes children's progress in all areas of development.
- Parents are encouraged to work in partnership with the nursery to benefit the children. Staff know the parents well, make them feel welcome and acknowledge their input in the assessment of the children and the running of the nursery. Good information is readily available.
- The management on site, and of the group of nurseries, is well organised and committed to providing quality care. There is a strong commitment to training, staff development and improving on good practice.

What needs to be improved?

- the written statement regarding behaviour management to include an anti-bullying strategy.

Outcome of the inspection

Good

CONDITIONS OF REGISTRATION

<i>All registered persons must comply with all conditions of registration included on his/her certificate of registration.</i>
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<i>As a result of this inspection conditions of registration have been imposed / varied / removed and a new certificate of registration will be issued.</i>

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
11	Develop the written statement of which parents and children are made aware, to include an anti-bullying strategy.

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

How effective is the nursery education?

The Acorn Day Nursery provides a very good nursery education, with children showing enthusiasm for learning through play. Generally, the children are making very good progress towards all of the early learning goals.

The quality of teaching is very good overall. The staff have a sound understanding of the Foundation Stage; seen through the planning of a wide range of interesting activities for the four year olds in particular. Assessments are used very effectively to establish children's ability on entry and to enable children to continue to make good progress. Staff know the children very well, and adjust planning to cover any individual needs and interests, including challenge for the more able. They have the knowledge and experience to support children with special educational needs and those who are learning to speak English as an additional language. They encourage all children to take part in all activities, and all children and their contributions are valued.

Good staff: child ratios allow for individual and small group work within the nursery. Staff explain the purpose of activities clearly, making good use of questions to encourage children to think. The balance between structured activities and free play is good. Children show interest in the activities, and move around confidently. Staff promote good behaviour effectively and children react positively. The good interaction between the staff and children contributes to the learning and caring environment.

Leadership and management is very good overall. Staff have relevant qualifications, continue to develop their skills, and show a commitment to the continuing improvement of the care and education offered by evaluating their practice and developing planning.

The partnership with parents and carers is very good. They are informed about their child's progress on an informal daily basis, receive reports and portfolios, and can talk to staff at any time.

What is being done well?

- There is a very good choice of activities during the free-play sessions, and the children's natural enthusiasm for learning is fostered very well.
- The children happily operate independently but also look to support their peers or be supported by them. They successfully make links and friendships, showing care for each other but are also able to negotiate and show assertiveness when they need to.
- Staff have a sound understanding of the Foundation Stage and the way

children learn. They use this knowledge to plan exciting and challenging activities that particularly motivate the older children to learn.

- Children's communication skills are developing well. They are learning to listen carefully to others and to speak clearly, and they enjoy discovering and using new words. Staff's questioning skills challenge children to use language for thinking and for expressing ideas, and this successfully underpins learning in all the curriculum areas.
- Children are learning to write; they make marks when playing, trace and copy their names. Older children learn to write their names from memory using correctly formed letters.

What needs to be improved?

- the planning of some of the adult-directed activities to ensure that the challenge set is appropriate for the younger three year olds.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Progress on the key issues raised at the last inspection has been very good, with successful implementation of the three key issues. The staff have developed routines in the planning for providing practical mathematical experiences for children and they are now making very good progress in this area. Technological resources are used to support this area of learning.

Children's independent use of books has been encouraged through making books more accessible and presenting more resources. Parents have more opportunities to share in their children's progress and are seen to contribute both informally, during the sessions, and to add comments to the children's achievement profile, including indicating opportunities for progress.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children show confidence, independence and perseverance as they move around the activities. Concentration skills are good for all ages. Interaction between children and adults is very good. Children behave very well, within defined limits, and show care and consideration for others. They are able to follow instructions, and older children have an understanding of responsibility. Children develop an awareness of other cultures through interest in festivals and real-life routines.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Very Good

Children communicate confidently; listening and taking turns in conversations. They use language for a wide range of purposes such as sequencing stories and songs and conveying feelings about new experiences. Children demonstrate how to use books, with the four-year-olds making good progress towards reading. Early mark-making skills are good; older children write lists and label work. Most of the children recognise letters and their sounds, and extend this skill in writing and talking.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children recognise numbers and are willing to count at every opportunity, with more able children working with large numbers. They compare different numbers of objects, learn about simple addition and subtraction, and begin to solve simple problems, with some more able children doing this with ease. Pattern making and sorting of objects is good. They are developing their knowledge of different shapes, including some 3-D objects, and understand concepts around position, size and weight.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Very Good

Children have a good awareness of the natural world and the changing seasons. They are able to explore and investigate many different materials. Children talk about past events enthusiastically; their nursery life and events such as holidays. They enjoy looking at the local community. Their awareness of their own families, their cultures and the beliefs of others is developing. Older children are adept at using the computer to support other areas of learning.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT	
Judgement:	Very Good
Children explore a variety of ways of moving through dance, movement and outdoor play. They confidently use apparatus and play ball games successfully. They handle an interesting range of materials, tools and small equipment, and their manipulative skills are good. Older children show a good awareness of their own physical needs, through good hygiene practices, looking at a healthy diet and participating in challenging physical activities.	

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT	
Judgement:	Very Good
Children enjoy taking part in role-play, and working with puppets. They work imaginatively with small-world resources. Children experience a range of sensory experiences throughout the free-play activities. Free-painting and other artwork takes place with enthusiasm; mixing colours and expressing individuality. Children explore sound with an excellent range of instruments, music and singing.	

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 improving the following:
- review the planning of some of the adult-directed activities for the younger three year olds to ensure that the challenge set is appropriate.

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.