



Office for Standards
in Education

NURSERY INSPECTION REPORT

URN EY233564

DfES Number: 585627

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 15/11/2004
Inspector Name Julie Youngman (TCCI)

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Full Day Care
Setting Name Acorn Day Nursery
Setting Address 2 Roman Road
Luton
Bedfordshire
LU3 2QT

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name Dr Christiane Elisabeth Fisher

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 August 2002. The nursery operates from a large detached property in Luton. The children are cared for in three separate classrooms, appropriate for their ages and stages of development. The baby unit is based in a separate building adjacent to the main nursery. The nursery has a large garden that is divided into different play areas for different age ranges. There are car parking facilities for several cars.

The provision is registered for 50 children aged three months to eight years. Children can attend on a variety of sessions. There are currently 79 children on the roll. This includes 19 funded three year olds and 4 funded four year olds. The nursery is open 50 weeks a year, five days a week. Sessions are from 8.00 am to 6.00 pm daily.

There are 16 full time staff some of whom are bi-lingual. Of the staff who work with the children, 8 have an early years qualification and 8 more are undergoing training at the time of inspection, there are also 2 volunteers and 6 regular students. The setting can support children with special needs or who have English as an additional language. The setting receives support from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership. No overnight care is offered.

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

How effective is the nursery education?

Children are making generally good progress towards the early learning goals in all six areas of learning. The children are happy and relaxed yet enthusiastic, they share, take turns and all get involved with the clearing up.

The teaching is generally good. The staff have a good knowledge of the stepping stones and the Foundation Stage Curriculum as they use the new planning, observation and record keeping systems. The staff plan a sound range of activities that provide an appropriate level of challenge for the children but they need ensure a balance between adult directed and child initiated activities. They also need to ensure they can show breadth and balance across the whole curriculum and the learning activities.

The leadership and management of the setting is very good. Over the past two years significant changes in structure, planning and record keeping as well as the building's physical environment have taken place. There are action plans to develop and enhance the setting over the next year or so and these include the development of clearer monitoring strategies.

The partnership with parents is generally good, relaxed and informal but with clear plans to develop this further with the initiation of parents evenings in the new year.

What is being done well?

- The leadership and management of Acorn Day Nursery is a key factor in its development. Major changes have been implemented successfully to engage the staff into the new systems of planning, observation and record keeping.
- Whilst the number of children at the setting has grown the re-organisation strategies and the desire to maintain small groups with a good adult:child ratio ensure the needs of the children are met in a happy relaxed atmosphere.
- The staff work very well as a team forming good relationships with each other and the children, there was a high level of respect shown for each other throughout the setting.

What needs to be improved?

- the informal systems of monitoring the impact of the curriculum on children's learning
- the balance between adult directed and child-initiated activities particularly within the creative elements of the curriculum

- the breadth and balance of the planned and delivered curriculum to ensure coverage of all aspects of the Foundation Stage Curriculum in all six areas.
- the use of adult's time to promote the children's learning
- the range and accessibility of appropriate resources to support the curriculum

What has improved since the last inspection?

This is the first S122 inspection

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

The children are relaxed and happy and show an interest in all the activities. They talk freely with each other and the adults, sharing personal experiences and expressing their views. The children's behaviour is generally good, sitting quietly when appropriate and they are learning to share and take turns. They are developing their personal independence but this could be further promoted.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Generally Good

The children and staff engage in many conversations and the staff use questioning well to encourage the children to think. The children have a rich experience of language as new words are introduced to them and they explore the sounds and shapes of letters. More opportunities to write/mark for a purpose could be developed.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

The children benefit from many opportunities to count and learn the number names, from specific counting activities to counting out loud just for fun. They gain good ideas of quantity as they see if there is enough fruit on the dish for them to have another piece and begin to understand shape and space as they complete jigsaws. More opportunities to develop and talk about patterns could be developed.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Generally Good

The children experience many opportunities to build and construct as they work with blocks and bricks to form a variety of structures. They find out about the needs of living things as they care for the setting's rabbits, ensuring they have food and fresh water. They also find out about their needs as they discuss the need to wear a coat outside or not, or enjoy a healthy fruit snack and drink of fresh water. The opportunities to use a computer or other technical equipment are, as yet, limited.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

The children use a range of small implements and tools safely and well, for example scissors. The children enjoy the time in the garden, running around, clambering and sliding on the climbing frame, pedalling the ride-on toys along the path. A new area is being developed and this could bring further opportunities for access to sand and water. The staff could use outside time to develop other curriculum areas, for example looking how the trees change over time, how it feels to be out of breath.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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The children greatly enjoy the range of creative activities using glitter, paper, cotton wool etc in many exciting collage pictures or painting space ships and astronauts. They have a great range of dressing up clothes to help them get into 'role' as they act out imaginary games. The staff should ensure there are sufficient opportunities for the children to freely explore colour, shape texture etc for themselves.

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 and formalise the informal systems for monitoring to involve all the staff and to cover all aspects of the curriculum
- review the balance between adult directed and child-initiated activities, particularly within the creative elements of the curriculum
- ensure sufficient appropriate resources are available and accessible to support the curriculum.

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.