



Office for Standards
in Education

NURSERY INSPECTION REPORT

URN 110050

DfES Number: 520121

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 08/03/2004

Inspector Name Gill Moore

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Sessional Day Care

Setting Name Acorn Preschool

Setting Address Holy Road Church Centre
Gosport Road
Fareham
Hampshire
PO14 3RL

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name Ms Kay Grant

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 Pre-school is situated in a church hall, which is located in Stubbington, Fareham, an urban area of Hampshire. Children who attend the group come from a variety of cultural and social backgrounds. The accommodation consists of a bright hall, and two separate rooms which are used one day a week. The group have access to a fully enclosed outdoor play area. The group is privately owned working under the umbrella of the church. The group is currently funded to offer free places to four year olds and are members of The Pre-school Learning Alliance.

There are presently seven members of staff in the team. The group is open Monday to Friday 9:30am to 12 noon and 12:30pm to 3:00pm for 39 weeks a year, term time only. There are currently 33 children on the register, none of these children have been identified as having special needs or English as an additional language.

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

How effective is the nursery education?

Acorn pre-school offers good quality nursery education where children are making generally good progress towards the early learning goals.

The overall quality of teaching is generally good. Staff have a good understanding of how children learn. They plan and provide a good range of practical activities, although these are currently not linked to children's assessments. Staff have a good knowledge of children's individual needs and praise and encourage them increasing confidence and self-esteem. Some aspects of the routine, and the availability and accessibility of equipment and resources hinders children's opportunities to be independent and does not always make the most of all learning opportunities, for example snack-time and opportunities for children to write. Staff question children effectively, although sometimes miss opportunities to extend older and more able children. Staff provide very good support for children with special educational needs. Children's behaviour is very good and positive relationships have been established.

Leadership and management are very good. Management have clear objectives and defined roles and responsibilities. They recognise their role in monitoring and evaluating practice. Dedicated staff work well as a team. They provide a stimulating, well-balanced programme for children to make progress in all areas of learning. Training is actively encouraged and in-house training is provided. The pre-school have developed close links with local primary schools and the early years partnership.

The partnership with parents is very good and strong relationships have been established. Parents are encouraged to share what they know about their child with staff through a variety of ways, for example home visits and using key worker reports. Parents are clearly informed about the learning programme through many sources and are actively encouraged to be involved in their child's learning. Excellent links are in place between pre-school and home.

What is being done well?

- Dedicated staff work well as a team and communicate effectively. They have established positive relationships with children attending the pre-school and have a good knowledge of their individual needs. They create a stimulating environment for children enabling them to develop in all areas of learning.
- Staff work closely with parents and very close links are encouraged between home and the pre-school. Parents are invited to play an active role in their child's learning, for example staff provide suggestions of activities to try at home, and are kept well informed about their child's achievements and progress.
- Children are happy and confident. They have developed positive

relationships with staff and their peers. They enjoy participating in a wide range of activities and respond well to the constant praise and encouragement from staff.

- Staff offer good support for children who have special educational needs. Effective systems are in place to support children and staff work with parents to identify clear targets, which are monitored and reviewed regularly, to assess the impact children's progress. Staff have established good systems of support from local primary schools and the early years partnership.

What needs to be improved?

- the organisation and availability of resources to enable children to independently access the full range of equipment, in particular with regards to creative activities, tools, materials and resources.
- opportunities to extend learning for older/more able children and provide sufficient opportunities for children to practice writing and recognise familiar words.
- the system for planning to ensure it is influenced by children's assessments and sufficient challenges are provided for the older/more able children.
- opportunities for children to be independent during snack-time.

What has improved since the last inspection?

The pre-school has made very good progress since the last inspection. The first key issue was to limit the number of children able to partipate in creative activities at any one time, and ensure evaluations of activities take place. The planning system has been evaluated and developed to include the number of children able to participate in the creative activity at any one time. All activities are now evaluated to establish whether learning objectives have been met and to highlight any changes that could take place if the activity were to be repeated.

The second key issue raised was to involve parents in the progress reports about their child's development. Children's written assessments have been adapted to include opportunities for parents to record comments or observations relating to their child's achievements and development. Staff encourage parents to include their own observations on the transfer records that move onto the school with their child.

The third key issue was to develop systems to evaluate teaching. Effective systems are now in place to monitor teaching. The leader and deputy of the pre-school play an active role in monitoring staff's performance to ensure that teaching is effective and a consistent approach applied. Appraisals are undertaken on an annual basis, which help to identify training needs and requirements. All staff attend regular training courses and cascade information to other members of the team during staff meetings.

The fourth key issue was to identify where support can be obtained if a child were to

attend whose first language was not English. The pre-school do not currently support any children for whom English is an additional language, however effective systems are now in place to support a child if they were to attend. The system of home visiting provides staff with the opportunity to discuss appropriate support, if required, and make contact with the relevant professionals and outside agencies.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children are confident and have established good relationships with adults and other children in the pre-school. They learn to co-operate with one another and suggest ideas, for example during role-play situations. They work well independently and as part of a group and recognise the need to share and take turns. Children's independence is limited at snack-time and during some activities, for example craft activities tend to be pre-prepared, adult-led and prescriptive.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children's spoken language is developing well. They express themselves through a good range of role-play situations, for example, going camping. They are confident in linking sounds to letters. Children enjoy looking at and exploring books re-telling stories to their peers. Children practice pencil control, for example through tracing, however opportunities for them to write and recognise familiar words are not freely available during the session.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children are confident in counting up to ten and many beyond. Many children can recognise numbers 1-9. They use good mathematical vocabulary when discussing shape, measurements and making comparisons, for example full and half-empty when comparing the water levels in bottles. Children engage in a broad range of practical activities and use free play to promote an understanding of shape, patterns and number, for example following sequences, using funnels in water play.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children enjoy using their senses and are provided with a range of activities enabling them to do so, such as cookery, food tasting and growing plants. Children learn about themselves and the world around them through planned topic work. They are able to recall past and present events in detail. Children show confidence in building and constructing and opportunities to use a range of information technology to support their learning including magnets, telephones and magnifying glasses.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children demonstrate a good sense of space and move confidently during physical activities. They use a very good range of large and small equipment both inside and out, for example bikes, slides, threading equipment and show good co-ordination, developing gross and fine motor skills. Children are confident in using a variety of tools and materials, such as scissors, cutters and glue sticks. They learn about the importance of keeping healthy and follow good hygiene procedures.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children enjoy expressing their imagination through a variety of ways such as role-play, music and movement and re-telling stories. They have opportunities to explore a variety of different textures, for example sand and clay. At times, children are unable to use their imagination to explore creativity as activities tend to be pre-prepared and adult-led. They are unable to independently access a range of tools, materials and resources. Children enjoy participating in music and singing sessions.

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

- use children's assessments to inform the planning and ensure sufficient challenges are provided to extend the older/more able children, in particular, opportunities to practice writing and recognition of familiar words.
- evaluate and improve the organisation and availability of resources to ensure children can be fully independent in the creative area and during snack time.

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.