



Office for Standards
in Education

COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN 132997

DfES Number: 516954

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date	08/02/2005
Inspector Name	Sue Davey

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type	Sessional Day Care
Setting Name	Acorn Pre School Group
Setting Address	Paulton Village Hall Farrington Road, Paulton Bristol BS39 7LW

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name	Acorn Pre School Group 1037159
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ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name	Acorn Pre School Group
Address	Paulton Village Hall Farrington Road, Paulton Bristol BS39 7LW

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 Pre-School has been open for over 20 years. It operates from the Village Hall in the rural village of Paulton on the outskirts of Bath. The group has access to the main hall, kitchen, toilets and an enclosed outside play space. A maximum of 26 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open each weekday during school term times. Sessions are from 09.00 to 11.45 and an afternoon session from 12.15 to 14.45.

There are currently 31 children aged from 2 to under 5 years on roll. Of these, 23 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the local area. The pre-school supports children with special educational needs.

There are seven members of staff, most of whom have an early years qualification or are currently attending further training. The setting receives support from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership, local support teacher and the Pre-school Learning Alliance.

How good is the Day Care?

Acorn Pre-School provides satisfactory care for children. The staff are experienced in childcare and most hold early years qualifications. They work effectively as a team and are well organised. Staff set up activities to cover all areas of learning. There is a good ratio of staff to children, so, children are well supervised. The very large hall is more than adequate for the number of children attending. There is an extensive range of toys and equipment which provide a variety of play opportunities. All regulatory records are in place but some documentation lacks the necessary detail and is due for review.

Staff are vigilant about children's safety. The premises and equipment are checked daily for hazards and action is taken to minimise risks. Some information is obtained from parents to ensure appropriate care is given to children. There are good procedures in place to maintain a healthy environment and children are encouraged to follow good hygiene practices. Children can help themselves to drinking water at

any time. Although snacks are provided, they are not always nutritious. All staff are trained in paediatric first aid. They know where to seek advice regarding child protection issues.

Children are happy and settled. Each session includes a balance of activities. Children choose what they want to play with and staff respect their choices. Afternoon sessions are organised part way through the year for children due to start school in September. Younger children are well supported as are those with special educational needs. Children are well behaved.

Staff build good relationships with parents and talk to them daily. Children's assessment files are shared with parents throughout the year. The prospectus is very well written and gives parents relevant information about the setting. Parents are encouraged to support the pre-school by serving on the management committee. However there is no system for them to help out during sessions.

What has improved since the last inspection?

At the last inspection the pre-school was asked to keep a written record of any incident occurring on the premises and to share them with parents. A specific record book is now in place although there are no incidents recorded to date.

What is being done well?

- Organisation of time and resources is very good. Staff have devised a system to make sure that there is good rotation of toys and equipment and a balance of physical and quieter activities at each session.
- The prospectus is well written and clearly presented. It contains relevant information about the setting and includes policies and procedures.
- Good attention is given to keeping children safe. The risk assessment identifies potential hazards and a daily safety check is carried out on the premises and equipment.
- Staff are aware of each child's capabilities. Activities for younger children and those with special needs are adapted as necessary.

What needs to be improved?

- the range of snacks children receive to encourage healthy eating
- the child protection policy to include a procedure to follow should an allegation be made against a member of staff, a student or a volunteer
- the system for recording attendance to clearly show the hours that children, staff and visitors are present
- documentation to include written permission from parents before agreeing to administer any medication
- the operational plan to show how the setting meets the National Standards

and presented in a format that is easily accessible to parents

PREVIOUS COMPLAINTS (This section applies only to inspections carried out from September 2004. The complaint record relates to complaints from the last inspection or 1st April 2004 whichever is later.)

There are no complaints to report.

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	Review and update the Operational Plan to show how procedures meet the National Standards and make it available to parents.
7	Make sure that written permission is obtained from parents before agreeing to administer medication to children.
13	Update the child protection policy to include a procedure to follow if an allegation is made against a member of staff, a student or a volunteer.

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

How effective is the nursery education?

Acorn Pre-School provides a good standard of nursery education overall and children are making generally good progress towards the early goals.

The quality of teaching is generally good. Staff are qualified, experienced and organised. They interact well with children and spend time talking and listening to them during their play. Staff supervise children appropriately. They provide a balance of resources and so children are fully occupied and well behaved. Planning covers all areas of learning. However, it refers to resources and rarely includes specific activities or relate to what children need to learn next. Topics are not used widely enough to challenge children. Staff note children's involvement in activities and record their development using an assessment format provided by the local Early Years Partnership. Children with special needs are well supported.

Leadership and management of the setting is generally good. The new voluntary parent committee are committed to improvement and keen to support staff in their role. Currently there is no system to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the group although annual staff appraisals are carried out. The leader is responsible for the day to day running of the pre-school. She meets regularly with staff to discuss future topics but does not involve them in actual planning. Monitoring and evaluation of the educational programme is limited.

The pre-school's partnership with parents is generally good. Staff have good relationships with parents and talk to them daily. The prospectus contains information about the educational programme and termly newsletters keep them up to date with future events and topics. However there is little encouragement for parents to spend time in the pre-school during sessions. Keyworkers meet with parents three times a year to share assessment records and discuss their child's progress. During the summer-term older children can take a book home to share with their parents.

What is being done well?

- Staff interact well with children. They join in with their play and support their learning. They are aware of the level of understanding of individual children and respond appropriately to their developmental needs.
- The rotation of toys and equipment is well organised to make the most of available resources and a good balance of activities is provided at each session.
- The Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) responds well to children who need additional support. Individual plans are prepared in liaison with parents and other professionals.

- Staff have a sensitive approach towards behaviour management. They know the children well and adapt their methods of dealing with individual situations appropriately.

What needs to be improved?

- planning by keyworkers to show how it links with the next steps in their key-children's learning specifically with linking sounds to letters and in some areas of mathematics
- the delivery of topics to provide interesting activities that challenge children's thinking, broaden their experiences and give them time to consolidate learning
- monitoring and evaluation of activities and identification of strengths and weaknesses of the educational programme and the provision overall
- encouragement for parents to be more involved in their children's education.

What has improved since the last inspection?

There has been generally good improvement since the last inspection when two key issues were raised.

The pre-school was asked to increase opportunities for large muscle movement in the majority of sessions, ensuring the room is organised to aid children's learning and skills development in safety. They were asked to focus on their use of assessment to plan for meeting individual next steps and to provide appropriate challenges. And to find ways to encourage children who are avoiding challenge to be come engaged in and concentrate on appropriate activities without dominating play.

Since then the group has purchased painting easels to encourage children to develop their large arm movements when painting. They sometimes use streamers to wave around in music and movement. A variety of physical play equipment is use on a regular basis. The room and activities are well organised to safely develop a range of skills. Children's assessments are based on the stepping stones and show their progress term by term. Staff know the children well and adapt activities to suit their level of understanding. However, planning does not show why specific activities are chosen or how they relate to what children need to learn next. During inspection children were well occupied and showed good concentration skills.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children settle quickly and are eager to play. They choose what they would like to do and persevere at self-chosen tasks. They have good self-esteem and look pleased with their achievements. Children relate well to staff. They play alongside each other and are well behaved. For instance, they sit quietly to listen to a story and are learning to share and take turns. Children are gaining independence and most take care of their own personal needs. However, staff often complete tasks for them.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Most children use spoken language to communicate. Those with speech and language difficulties are well supported. They talk about familiar events and answer questions at large group time. Children enjoy looking at books and listening to stories. However, there are few occasions when sounds are linked to letters and little visual stimulation regarding the printed word. Children have good access to writing materials, sometimes in role-play. They are learning to form recognisable letter shapes.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children practise counting by rote. Various activities support their number recognition and development of accurate counting. Children practise classifying objects at tidy-up time. However, there are few activities which involve calculation and the daily routine is not always used to reinforce learning. Children manipulate blocks and create patterns by threading beads. They experience volume with sand and water play although, their access to activities involving shape and measure is limited.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children show interest in the activities provided although topics are not used well in this area. Children design and build with a range of resources. They make very good use of recycled materials. Children have good access to technology. They use appropriate software and demonstrate competence in basic computer skills. Children have a concept of time through the daily routine. They briefly study their local environment and sometimes learn about other cultures and festivals.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children are physically active. They have regular access to a range of equipment and activities designed for large muscle development. Children run, jump, climb, throw, catch and pedal wheeled toys. They take part in music and movement sessions. Children have some spatial awareness as they manoeuvre themselves without bumping into others. Children are aware of their bodily needs and ask for support when necessary. They work with playdough and manipulate small items with skill and dexterity.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children regularly work with paint and collage materials. They create three dimensional models with playdough, construction toys and recycled materials. Many craft activities are adult directed. Children sing familiar songs and sometimes play musical instruments. They engage in imaginative role-play and dress up in various costumes. However, resources are not well presented and there is little support to extend their own ideas. Children use facial expression and gestures to depict a character.

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

- involve keyworkers in the planning of appropriate activities to address specific areas of development. Make sure that plans are based on staff's knowledge of what children need to learn next
- regularly monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the educational programme and identify strengths and weaknesses of the provision overall
- develop strategies to encourage parents to be more involved in their children's education.

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.