

Acorn Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	EY340856
Inspection date	28/03/2011
Inspector	Susan Marriott

Setting address	Burton Park, Polwell Lane, Burton Latimer, Kettering, NN15 5PS
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Telephone number	01536 726700
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Type of setting	Childcare on non-domestic premises
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

The provider must provide a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must provide a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Childcare (Inspection) Regulations 2008 regulations 9 and 10).

The setting also makes provision for children older than the early years age group which is registered on the voluntary and/or compulsory part(s) of the Childcare Register. This report does not include an evaluation of that provision, but a comment about compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Register is included in Annex B.

Please see our website for more information about each childcare provider. We publish inspection reports, conditions of registration and details of complaints we receive where we or the provider take action to meet the requirements of registration.

Description of the setting

Acorn Day Nursery was registered in 2006. The nursery is one of eight provisions run by Acorn Childcare Ltd and operates from purpose built premises at Burton Park in Burton Latimer, Northamptonshire. Children come from a wide geographical area and attend for a variety of sessions. Children use two outdoor play areas, both of which are enclosed.

The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory part of the Childcare Register to provide a maximum of 65 places for children aged under eight years. Of these, 65 children may be in the early years age group and of these, not more than 24 may be under two years. The nursery is open each weekday from 7.15am to 6.15pm all year round, except bank holidays. Facilities include a kitchen, staff room, office, two meeting rooms, toilet and wash areas and interlinking children's accommodation rooms.

There are currently 64 children aged from four months to five years on roll. Of these, 23 receive funding for nursery education. The nursery supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those with English as an additional language. The nursery employs 16 staff to work with the children, eight of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications. The nursery is a member of the National Day Nursery Association and receives support from the local authority.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is inadequate.

The needs of children are not met because three specific legal requirements are not fully met limiting the effectiveness of measures to safeguard the welfare of children. Some staff interaction with children is of variable quality and inconsistencies between policy and the organisation of practice mean that the overall quality of provision is compromised. Some staff do not have an adequate understanding of inclusive practice. There is a suitable working partnership with parents which ensures they are informed of issues relating to their child's care and learning. The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement is currently poor because self-evaluation does not accurately review current practice and identify appropriate areas for improvement.

Overall, the early years provision requires significant improvement. The registered person is given a Notice to Improve that sets out actions to be carried out.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To comply with the requirements of the EYFS the registered person must take the following action by the specified date:

- improve the recording of children's hours of 30/04/2011

- attendance to show the exact times of arrival and departure, this refers to when children leave the premises for an outing and return from that outing (Documentation)
- keep a written record of complaints and their outcome (Safeguarding and promoting children's welfare) (also applies to both parts of the Childcare Register) 30/04/2011
 - ensure that a full risk assessment is carried out for each type of outing that includes the details set out in the welfare requirements (Safeguarding and promoting children's welfare) 30/04/2011
 - promote effective anti-discriminatory practice, ensuring that every child is included and not disadvantaged because of dietary restrictions (Organisation) 30/04/2011
 - improve the systems for the organisation of the setting to include the key person system and ongoing effective procedures to evaluate the provision and implement areas for improvement (Organisation) 30/04/2011
 - improve knowledge and understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage learning and development requirements so that children are provided with an educational programme that will enable them to make progress towards the early learning goals in all areas of learning. (Early learning goals) 30/06/2011

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children's safety and welfare is compromised because the register does not accurately record the presence of children and staff, effective risk assessment is not in place for outings to the Forest School and a suitable complaints record is not kept. This are breaches of legal requirements. Nevertheless, regular risk assessments of the premises and daily checks are appropriately recorded and ensure that most hazards are minimised. Robust procedures are in place for the vetting of new staff and include all aspects of checking suitability of adults working with children in order to keep them safe. An effective safeguarding children policy and procedure is in place. Good security measures are in place to protect staff and children from unauthorised persons. Visitors are always challenged, their identity is checked and their presence is recorded in a visitor record. There are clear fire safety procedures. Fire drill practises are held every six weeks to ensure that the children and staff follow the correct procedures. Some examples of sound daily practice, such as, ongoing explanations from staff, reinforce children's understanding of safety issues. For example, children are reminded to use their 'walking feet' indoors because running may cause accidents.

Although many staff hold appropriate levels of qualification, some do not have sufficient understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage. The nursery building is designed and purpose-built for providing childcare. Good levels of decoration,

displays of children's paintings and artwork, photographs of staff and information for parents help to make the building warm and welcoming. However, the current organisation of staffing adversely affects the quality of provision for the younger children, impacting upon their ability to provide individualised support to their key children and meet children's individual needs and routines. Staff have some understanding of anti-discriminatory practice but this is not universally reflected in their daily practice with children. For example, at lunch time, some children with dietary needs are not offered an appropriate alternative to cream on their apple crumble.

There are suitable relationships with parents and carers and many speak positively about the nursery. Parents receive appropriate information about the setting and their children's progress, for example, through notices on the board in the foyer, newsletters and daily talks with staff. The nursery communicates adequately with other providers and partners supporting children and the nursery receives frequent support from the local authority. Management is committed to funding training to update staff knowledge and leaders are steadily introducing improvements to the service in consultation with the advisory services. However, managers at all levels are having too little impact in raising the quality of provision. Insufficient monitoring by management means that weaknesses are not being identified and addressed. Self-evaluation does not accurately review current practice and has failed to identify the weaknesses in the organisational systems. Senior managers are employed to provide guidance and support for the site manager but collectively they have failed to identify significant breaches of specific legal requirements, compromising the welfare of children and the capacity of the nursery to drive continuous improvement.

The quality and standards of the early years provision and outcomes for children

Taken overall, the outcomes for children are inadequate as a result of the staff's variable knowledge and understanding of good quality childcare, learning and development. Children are not always sufficiently stimulated and challenged in their learning because staff do not consistently plan effectively and organise the daily routine well enough. Staff clearly spend a lot of time completing various detailed planning sheets. They observe children as they play and record comments under the six areas of learning in the children's folders. However, because some intentions for learning are not clear, some staff are unsure of what learning has taken place and the records do not provide a sufficiently cohesive picture of children's attainment and progress. Information is not sufficiently linked to the language of the Early Years Foundation Stage to guide and support staff in identifying the next steps in learning. Therefore, the observation and assessment system is not fully effective in actively moving the children's progress forward.

Some members of staff interact very well with children and effectively draw the learning from child-led play. For example, they ask open questions to encourage the children to describe what the sand feels like, as they take off their shoes and socks and climb into the large, covered sand pit. However, other members of staff merely supervise children at play and fail to effectively engage in enthusiastic

conversation and discussion about the children's chosen activity. This means that some spontaneous learning opportunities are not always fully exploited.

Children experience a well presented, light and airy premises and outdoor play area that are interesting and well maintained. This provides safe and comfortable accommodation for their care and play. Rooms are set up well with different experiences, such as, role play, water and a creative table. By working effectively with advisers from the local authority, staff are successfully improving the learning environment for children through setting up stimulating table-top displays to bring wall-mounted display down to child-eye level. A self-registration board has been introduced to promote name recognition at snack time. Children enjoy the free flow between indoor and outdoor play. The outdoor environment is set up with a digging area, a wooded 'Forest School' area, builders yard role play, bikes and other experiences.

Babies are cared for in the Ladybirds room. Children clearly feel safe and snuggle into the arms of a member of staff as she talks gently to them. However, at times staff are filling out paperwork, such as, sleep charts at the expense of quality time spent playing with the children, who are left to crawl or toddle about on their own. Consequently, younger children are unsettled at times and their needs are not always promptly met. Acorn staff exhibit some delightful interaction with toddlers whilst they are changing nappies and good hygiene procedures are implemented consistently. However, children do not have free access to a wide range of activities throughout the day, because some areas of the playroom are closed off to make supervision easier for staff. Ducks from a nearby pond arrive in the garden. The toddlers are thrilled to see them and bang on the windows, trying to attract their attention. However, staff merely repeat their words 'duck, duck' and do not extend young children's learning effectively. Children sit waiting for lunch with nothing to do until a member of staff begins to sing songs and encourages them to join in with actions.

Squirrels and Oaks children benefit from an exceptionally spacious indoor and outdoor environment where the age groups can mix. However, this means that staff have large areas to supervise and they fail to notice a small group of children misbehaving near the interactive whiteboard. Intervention is left to the manager entering the room to check on the departure of the Forest School party. Although the nursery proclaims that children are encouraged to develop their independence at mealtimes, staff do not always implement this policy in practice. On the day of inspection, lunch was an 'all-in-one' casserole style meal. Although children pour their own drinks, they do not serve themselves portions of food, choose whether they want a bread roll or not, or pour their own cream.

Annex A: record of inspection judgements

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality
Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong
Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound
Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	4
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	4

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	4
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	4
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	4
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	4
The effectiveness of safeguarding	4
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	4
The effectiveness of partnerships	3
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	3

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	4
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	4
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	4
The extent to which children feel safe	4
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	4
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	3

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Annex B: the Childcare Register

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are:

Not Met (with actions)

The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are:

Not Met (with actions)

The registered provider does not meet the requirements of the compulsory and or voluntary part/s of the Childcare Register.

To comply with the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register, the registered person must take the following action/s by the specified date:

- keep a daily record of the names of the children looked after on the premises and their hours of attendance (Records to be kept) (also applies to the voluntary part of the Childcare Register) 30/04/2011
- take action as specified in the early years section of the report. (Procedures for dealing with complaints) 30/04/2011

To comply with the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register, the registered person must take the following action/s by the specified date:

- take action as specified in the compulsory part of the Childcare Register section of the report (Records to be kept) 30/04/2011
- take action as specified in the early years section of the report. (Procedures for dealing with complaints) 30/04/2011