

Acorn Day Nursery

2 Roman Road, Luton, Bedfordshire, LU3 2QT

Inspection date	11/04/2013
Previous inspection date	22/06/2009

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	4
	Previous inspection:	3
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		4
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		4
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		4

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision is inadequate

- Observation and assessment of children's learning is weak. This means children's individual learning needs are not accurately identified so they can make progress in their learning and development
- Poor planning for the educational programmes means that children's developmental needs are not always addressed, and leads to children who are not always motivated to learn.
- The layout and management of activities and resources does not promote a stimulating environment to encourage children to become engaged and motivated in their play and learning.
- Children's attendance is not suitably recorded, which puts their safety at risk and means that one of the safeguarding and welfare requirements is not met.
- Self-evaluation is not sufficiently robust to address key weaknesses to safeguard children and promote their learning and development. In particular, staff practice is not being monitored with sufficient rigour to secure continuous improvement.

It has the following strengths

- Staff have friendly, warm relationships with parents.
- Links with other providers, such as when children move on to school, are well established.

Information about this inspection

Inspections of registered early years provision are:

- scheduled at least once in every inspection cycle – the current cycle ends on 31 July 2016
- scheduled more frequently where Ofsted identifies a need to do so, for example where provision was previously judged inadequate
- brought forward in the inspection cycle where Ofsted has received information that suggests the provision may not be meeting the legal requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage or where assessment of the provision identifies a need for early inspection
- prioritised where we have received information that the provision is not meeting the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and which suggests children may not be safe
- scheduled at the completion of an investigation into failure to comply with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The provision is also registered on the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. This report includes a judgment about compliance with the requirements of that register.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed activities in all rooms and the outside learning environment.
- The inspector held discussions with the registered person/manager, the deputy and staff.
The inspector looked at children's assessment records, planning documentation, the self-evaluation form and a range of other documentation, including a selection of policies and children's records.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents spoken to on the day of inspection.

Inspector
Jane Mount

Full Report

Information about the setting

Acorn Day Nursery was registered in 2002 on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. It is privately owned and operates from two converted residential buildings in the Leagrave area of Luton, Bedfordshire. There is a fully enclosed area available for outdoor play.

The nursery employs 11 members of childcare staff, the majority of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3. The registered provider, who is also the manager, is a qualified teacher with Early Years Professional Status.

The nursery opens Monday to Friday all year round. Sessions are from 7.30am to 6pm. Children attend a variety of sessions. There are currently 90 children on roll who are in the early years age group. The nursery provides funded early years education for three- and four-year-olds. Out of school care is also provided for children aged over five years. The nursery supports children who speak English as an additional language and children with special needs and/or disabilities.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

To meet the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage the provider must:

- implement an effective assessment system to help staff understand children's level of achievement, interests and learning styles, and use this to plan and shape learning experiences for each child reflecting those observations
- maintain a daily record of the names of the children being cared for on the premises and their hours of attendance.

To further improve the quality of the early years provision the provider should:

- develop robust systems of self-evaluation, so they are effective and rigorous and are used to set challenging targets for future improvement
- develop the organisation of resources to provide an enabling environment, indoors and out, with stimulating resources which allow children to explore and be motivated in their learning.

Inspection judgements

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend

The educational programme does not adequately promote children's development. Some members of staff have sufficient understanding of how children learn. However, many have an insecure knowledge of the learning and development requirements of the revised Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage. This means that the quality of teaching is inconsistent across the nursery and children's learning needs are not sufficiently met. Staff carry out observations of children, generally capturing their achievements and interests, but these are not frequent enough to accurately build on children's progress. A revised assessment format has recently been introduced to support staff and this is used to assess whether a child is meeting their expected level of attainment. Staff are developing an understanding of how to use this, but it is not yet used well enough to enable them to plan effectively for the next steps in children's learning. Consequently, planning is not always effective in matching activities to children's needs so they can make progress in their learning.

A key person system is in operation and they work with parents to gather information about their key child when they first start at the nursery. For example, new parents complete an 'all about me' sheet with the key person and, along with discussions, this helps the key person to identify children's starting points. When the child has settled in the nursery environment, parents are asked to complete a development sheet which shares information about how children are developing at home. However, because assessment and planning is weak, these information gathering processes have little impact on children's learning. This is because it is not used by all staff to plan developmentally appropriate and stimulating play experiences for children to promote their learning. Parents are aware they can look at their child's development record at any time. Planned occasions, such as parents evenings and room meetings, are used as more formal opportunities to share information and look at their children's books. Staff show an awareness of the requirement to implement the progress check at age two. They have begun to complete the assessments where appropriate and to share these with parents.

Overall, staff are familiar with the prime and specific areas of learning and provide a range of resources and activities to cover these. Children in the pre-school use their imaginations when dressing up as fire fighters. They enjoy playing games that involve rescuing each other from 'fires' and learn to collaborate with other children as they work together sharing ideas. However, staff do not take advantage of the play situation to develop children's learning. For example, they do not introduce different scenarios or extend their communication and language skills through discussion and conversation. Consequently, children quickly become bored and leave the activity. Pre-school children have the opportunity to develop their skills in using a computer. They concentrate hard because they enjoy the activity, and this is beginning to help them to develop the skills required for their future learning, such as when they move on to school. In the holiday club, school-age children interact well with staff and enjoy playing table games with them or making a papier mache disco ball.

Children have some opportunities to express themselves creatively throughout the nursery. For example, in the Rising 3's room, children take part in a planned activity using sequins and glue. Children eagerly put the glue on the paper and make spontaneous patterns when sprinkling the shiny sequins. Staff interact with the children, helping them to spread the glue. However, although this is a planned activity, staff are unclear as to how they are going to use the play experience to promote individual children's learning, and children quickly lose interest. In the under two's room, staff have identified an interest from children to be food, and they organise a planned outdoor activity using pieces of plastic fruit in a sand tray. The younger children enjoy playing outside but they are not interested in the activity. This is because staff are not enthusiastic or try to use effective teaching techniques to engage children and motivate them in their play and learning.

The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children

The organisation of the environment does not always provide surroundings for children that are stimulating and enabling and which encourage them to be active learners. For example, no facilities are available to display books so they are interesting and inviting to children in the Rising 3's room. Instead, the books are left on the floor in the corner of the room and children tend to either ignore them or they get ripped and misused when children are involved in active or boisterous play. In the under 2's room a large sensory tent takes up valuable play space and prevents crawling babies from accessing the interactive wall displays. However, in general, children's independence is encouraged. For example, staff encourage children to try to put on their own coats before going outside to play. Also, children can make some choices in their play. For example, low-level shelving units in all rooms allow children to access suitable and sufficient resources.

The established staff team develop trusting relationships with parents, and this helps to support children's emotional development. For example, the key person works with parents to help children quickly settle in the nursery environment, and the daily routines become familiar to children, helping them to feel settled. When children are moving rooms staff work together and short visits are organised for children so they become familiar with their new surroundings and new key person.

Adequate strategies are in place to manage children's behaviour. For example, children are praised when they do something well, such as helping to tidy away resources at lunch time. This helps to build children's self-esteem and sense of achievement. Also, staff are beginning to talk with children about how to behave kindly to others and to share. For example, when two children argue over a construction toy in the pre-school room, staff talk about how they could take turns to play with the piece of equipment. At times, children do not behave well, which has a negative impact on the other children. This tends to be because the learning environment does not always meet the developmental needs of children so they are engaged and motivated in their play.

Through the daily routine, children are developing an understanding of how to keep themselves safe. For example, staff often remind younger children not to run when inside in case they fall and hurt themselves. Older children learn the safety rules in relation to going up and down the stairs to the pre-school room, which raises their awareness of

safety issues.

Staff implement suitable hygiene practices to protect children's health. For example, children's sleep mats are cleaned thoroughly after each use. Children have opportunities to learn about personal care routines and how to stay healthy. Older children are learning about the need to wash their hands before they eat and after visiting the toilet. Staff support younger children through cleaning their hands for them. Children are beginning to develop an understanding of healthy eating as they sometimes talk about the benefits of eating fruits and vegetables. Plenty of fresh air keeps children fit as they play outside regularly. Children are developing a positive attitude towards being active as they generally enjoy playing outside. However, staff do not effectively plan outdoor play experiences to meet the needs of all children. For example, children in the under two's room regularly use the outdoor play environment. However, no account is taken of how non-mobile babies' physical development needs will be addressed in the outdoor environment as they just sit in a buggy watching the other children play.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision

This inspection took place because concerns were raised with Ofsted about the overall quality of the provision. The leadership and management is inadequate because the provider does not ensure the safeguarding and welfare and the learning and development requirements of the revised Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage are met. The provider, who is also the manager, recognises that there are some areas that require development and she has been working hard with her staff team to address some of the issues. However, the improvements that have been implemented are not sufficient to significantly improve practice and meet the requirements.

Safeguarding arrangements in relation to child protection have been established. This includes having named designated persons responsible for ensuring the correct safeguarding procedures are followed if there was a concern. Also, all staff undertake safeguarding training to help them understand their roles and responsibilities. This is regularly updated. Most required documentation for the safe management of the nursery is in place, such as accident records and children's information. Registers are also in place but some staff do not prioritise ensuring children's attendance is accurately recorded. This puts children's safety and welfare at risk and is a breach of the safeguarding and welfare requirements. It also does not meet the requirements of the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. Recruitment and induction procedures ensure staff are safe and suitable to work with children. Staff are vigilant about the security of the premises and check all visitors before entry. Suitable procedures are in place to manage the deployment of staff and apprentices and the maintenance of the required adult-to-child ratios to protect children.

Annual appraisals and regular supervisions are used as ways of monitoring staff performance and identifying training needs. Staff regularly update their knowledge through attending a variety of early years courses and workshops. The provider also provides a lot of in-house training to meet the needs of her staff team. For example, they

have recently been using staff meetings to complete a comprehensive range of training on effective observation, assessment and planning to promote children's learning. Staff knowledge is becoming more secure but there is still poor monitoring of children's progress and ineffective planning and organisation of activities and resources. Consequently, children do not progress as well as they should and therefore the learning and development requirements are not met. The provider has a self-evaluation system in place to monitor practice and evaluate the views of others, such as parents. However, this process is not sufficiently robust to systematically monitor the quality of the provision, in particular staff practice. This is because it lacks sufficient rigour and does not clearly identify priorities to secure future improvement. Recommendations made at the last inspection have only been partially addressed.

Parents are complimentary about the care their children receive and feel that staff are friendly and approachable. Partnership working with others, such as the local children's centre, has been established and this has been found to be beneficial in supporting children and their families. Positive links with other early years settings, such as the local schools, help children to make smooth transitions when moving on to the next stage in their learning. Systems for working with parents and other agencies help to ensure children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are given valuable support. Staff have also built positive relationships with families and children with English as an additional language.

The Childcare Register

The requirements for the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are

**Not Met
(with
actions)**

The requirements for the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are

**Not Met
(with
actions)**

To meet the requirements of the Childcare Register the provider must:

- maintain a daily record of the names of the children being cared for on the premises and their hours of attendance (Records to be kept) (compulsory part of the Childcare Register).
- maintain a daily record of the names of the children being cared for on the premises and their hours of attendance (Records to be kept) (voluntary part of the Childcare Register).

What inspection judgements mean

Registered early years provision

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	Outstanding provision is highly effective in meeting the needs of all children exceptionally well. This ensures that children are very well prepared for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 2	Good	Good provision is effective in delivering provision that meets the needs of all children well. This ensures children are ready for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	Satisfactory provision is performing less well than expectations in one or more of the key areas. It requires improvement in order to be good.
Grade 4	Inadequate	Provision that is inadequate requires significant improvement and/or enforcement action. The provision is failing to give children an acceptable standard of early years education and/or is not meeting the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be inspected again within 12 months of the date of this inspection.
Met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider continues to meet the requirements for registration.
Not met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider does not meet the requirements for registration.

Inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of provision that is registered on the Early Years Register. The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and care, known as the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY233564
Local authority	Luton
Inspection number	907826
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 17
Total number of places	80
Number of children on roll	90
Name of provider	Christiane Elisabeth Fisher
Date of previous inspection	22/06/2009
Telephone number	01582 574390

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Type of provision

For the purposes of this inspection the following definitions apply:

Full-time provision is that which operates for more than three hours. These are usually known as nurseries, nursery schools and pre-schools and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the higher fee for registration.

Sessional provision operates for more than two hours but does not exceed three hours in any one day. These are usually known as pre-schools, kindergartens or nursery schools

and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the lower fee for registration.

Childminders care for one or more children where individual children attend for a period of more than two hours in any one day. They operate from domestic premises, which are usually the childminder's own home. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Out of school provision may be sessional or full-time provision and is delivered before or after school and/or in the summer holidays. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. Where children receive their Early Years Foundation Stage in school these providers do not have to deliver the learning and development requirements in full but should complement the experiences children receive in school.

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