



Little Acorns

Inspection report for early years provision

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| Unique Reference Number | EY336168 |
| Inspection date | 06 February 2007 |
| Inspector | Angela Cole |
| Setting Address | Little Acorns, 84 Firgrove Crescent, Yate, Bristol, Avon, BS37 7AG |
| Telephone number | 01454 850 122 |
| E-mail | |
| Registered person | Mrs Woodman And Mrs Evans |
| Type of inspection | Integrated |
| Type of care | Full day care |

ABOUT THIS INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality of childcare and, if applicable, of nursery education. The inspection was carried out under Part XA Children Act 1989 as introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000 and, where nursery education is provided, under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004; the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding; and, where nursery education is provided, the *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration or 1 April 2004 whichever is the later.

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

For more information about early years inspections, please see the booklet *Are you ready for your inspection?* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Little Acorns is one of two nurseries run by a private partnership. It has been operating in Yate, South Gloucestershire since 1993. It moved to its current location in a converted shop in 2003 and registered under the existing management team in 2006. It provides care on two floors of the three-storey building. Children under three years have access to two playrooms, a sleep room and changing facilities on the first floor. Children aged two to five years have use of a playroom, a smaller, messy play area and toilets on the ground floor. The setting also includes an office and a kitchen where children's meals are prepared each day. Children have access to an enclosed garden to the rear of the property. A maximum of 29 children may attend the setting at any one time. The nursery opens from 08.00 to 18.00 on Monday to Friday, excluding Bank Holidays.

There are currently 42 children aged from three months to under five years on roll. Of these, 16 children receive funding for early education. Children come from within the town and from the surrounding area. The nursery currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and the staff have experience of supporting children learning English as an additional language. A team of nine members of staff work in the nursery. Of these, five staff hold appropriate early years qualifications and one is working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children have regular fresh air and exercise in the small garden or at adjacent park where they develop their skills and confidence on challenging, large equipment. On site, they dig the strip of soil and have free access to small equipment such as balls and hoops. They balance on stepping stones and jump to gain control as they land on two feet. Children develop good skills with small tools, confidently fetching scissors to cut along straight lines and using sticky tape for themselves.

The children are cared for in re-decorated and newly-furnished premises. These are very clean and staff are aware of the need to keep the warm air in during winter. Children are protected from cross infection through the staff's good awareness of hygiene, for example, regarding nappy changing. They learn why they must regularly wash their hands and use individual flannels to wipe their own faces after lunch. Children benefit from good consistency with their home care regarding accidents and the administering of medication. Parents and staff have in-depth discussion about the children's health and physical care as they arrive and at home time.

Children learn the importance of drink as they help themselves to water at any time and pour their own milk at mealtimes. They learn the value of a healthy diet as they help to prepare the ample quantities of fruit and vegetables. Children gain good independence at the cafeteria for their snacks and enjoy the nutritious, home-cooked meals. This is because staff are on hand for support, to encourage them to try different tastes and ensure they clear away after themselves. The children benefit from close liaison with parents regarding their dietary needs.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children play in compact premises that are safe, secure and, overall, suitable for their purpose. The toilet facilities are soon to be extended and there is space to enlarge the garden to provide children with more room to be safely active. The furniture, equipment and toys provided are effective for their purpose and help to create an accessible and stimulating environment. The resources are of a suitable design, well maintained and conform to safety standards. The available equipment and resources are welcoming to children and, overall, offer access to the necessary range of activities which promotes their development.

The staff take positive steps to ensure that children are safe within the setting and on outings. Children arrive and depart safely as the premises are secure and adults are vigilant at all times.

Those who require a sleep are frequently checked in the attractive sleep room to ensure their safety. Staff assess and manage risks competently, for example, frequently monitoring the garden and posting prominent notices to ensure the stairgates are closed. Children learn to keep themselves safe. For example, they follow calm ways to move around the premises and learn how to leave in an emergency.

The children's welfare is given high priority. They are safeguarded by the staff's clear understanding of first aid and child protection issues. This is underpinned by comprehensive policies and procedures to support staff to take appropriate action in the event of any concern.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enjoy their time in nursery and enthusiastically begin to play as soon as they arrive. They are well motivated in their self-chosen activities, for example, to design bookmarks and collect the materials they need. They show interest and excitement in their play as they discover sheets of ice and exclaim how cold these are. The babies are happy and well stimulated by a wide range of sensory experiences, including play with a variety of treasure baskets containing natural materials. Young children achieve well as staff effectively use their growing understanding of the 'Birth to three matters' framework to observe and plan for them. Two-year-olds benefit from the stimulation of older children's play and are well supported by their keyworkers. Children of all ages relate well to each other, whilst three-year-olds begin to form strong friendship groups. All children have very positive relationships with the staff, listen well to them and seek assistance from them when needed.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children make consistently good progress in all of the areas of learning. They confidently join in conversation based on pictures in books and tell simple stories, for example, about a painting of a lion among trees. They use language to negotiate in their play and are keen to answer questions, including about the calendar and weather. They use their 'listening ears' and learn new words such as 'February'. Children enjoy rhymes and know the initial sounds of their own and other's names. They eagerly draw and paint and name their work when they wish. Children recognise numerals and older ones are sometimes challenged to count and calculate how many girls and boys altogether. They gain a good understanding of shape, space and measure through solving practical problems. For example, they recognise a square from a display and place coloured pegs in a pattern with some 'at the top'.

Children develop a good knowledge and understanding of the world. They effectively learn about the environment on walks, for example, to access climbing equipment that is only available in the park. They follow some outings up with a variety of art work, for example, based on birds they have sighted. Children investigate the texture of damp sand and explore soil for worms. They begin to understand changes to cooking ingredients. They eagerly role play with technological items, such as a calculator, and sometimes choose their own computer programs. They gain a good insight into different celebrations that are meaningfully introduced through, for example, dark nights and fireworks for Diwali. Children explore a range of media and

materials, for example, to mix their own paint colours on paper and identify five shades of blue in one area. They enjoy creating 'small worlds' and role play, for example, at the 'vet's'. They all eagerly respond to music and songs to play instruments rhythmically and to add spontaneous movement as they join in action songs.

The teaching provides supportive challenges for children of all ages and abilities. Staff understand the children well and provide a wide range of activities and experiences to assist their development. Children's progress is effectively promoted through staff's growing understanding of the Foundation Stage. Adults clearly appreciate how children learn through their play and the value of following up children's spontaneous interest, for example, about space. Planning covers all areas of learning and indicates the general aim of each activity through the early learning goal. However, it does not clearly link to the regular assessment of individual children's progress through the stepping stones. Staff make good use of time and available resources to support children's learning. They regularly evaluate the children's responses to help meet their needs effectively.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children settle well in the family atmosphere of the group where equality of opportunity for all children is actively promoted. They relate well to others as older children share resources such as books and support younger ones, for example, when they regularly meet in the garden. Children effectively make decisions as they choose their activities and access materials and tools from low-level storage. The nursery provides a welcome to different families through the evident resources that include greetings written in a variety of languages.

The staff are well aware that children may have special needs. They are now proactive in ensuring that these children receive appropriate support when their needs are identified or they join the nursery. The co-ordinator frequently observes the children's responses and works in close liaison with their parents and other professionals. The adults work well together to effectively manage a wide range of children's behaviour in ways that promote their welfare and development. Children begin to learn positive strategies, such as using 'kind hands'. They are well supported to resolve any conflicts that occur and their self esteem is fostered by strong emphasis on the use of praise. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents is good. Children benefit from the consistency of support, for example, regarding parents' wishes about collection. Families are offered detailed information about the nursery and the Foundation Stage curriculum through the detailed prospectus, informative noticeboards and regular letters. Parents receive good information about the children as babies' days are clearly explained on written sheets and staff talk to all parents about their children's time at the nursery. Twice-yearly meetings with staff are planned to share the children's developmental records, though parents' comments are not yet included in these to inform the assessments. Families value the welcoming environment and have effective opportunities for meaningful involvement in their children's learning. They are welcome to stay or to talk about their interests with the children. Many are practically involved through sharing resources, such as books, craft materials and garden items.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Robust systems are in place for appointing, vetting and supporting the continuing suitability of staff. The operational planning is detailed to foster the children's health, safety, care and learning. For example, a good adult-to-child ratio is maintained and procedures are in place to support individual children, including the use of keyworkers. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

The nursery's documentation is well maintained. Systems are in place so that records are completed to show the hours of attendance of children, staff and visitors. Documents are kept accessible in secure storage and the nursery has good regard for confidentiality. The group has set up a log to record any complaint and this is compliant with Ofsted's requirements. Effective systems are being developed for sharing documents with parents, such as the records of children's progress.

Leadership and management are good. The providers promote clear aims and objectives. They are regularly involved in the daily life of the nursery to support staff and to monitor the provision. Staff's professional development is effectively encouraged through appraisal, on-going training and informal sharing of current literature. This ensures adults are motivated and that children benefit from their increasing skills. Regular evaluation of children's responses enables staff to set clear direction to improve the organisation and outcomes for children. The adults in the nursery enjoy each other's company and work well together. They show high commitment to promoting an inclusive environment in which every child matters.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since registration there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards. The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by the parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

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WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- continue to develop on-site opportunities for children's use of large equipment. (also applies to nursery education)

The quality and standards of the nursery education

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- develop the system for planning so this is closely linked to assessment through the stepping stones to support individual children's needs. Include parents' comments in the developmental records to inform the assessment of children's progress.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education (HMI ref no 2599)* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk