



## Acres of Fun Limited

Inspection report for early years provision

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| <b>Unique Reference Number</b> | EY264744  |
| <b>Inspection date</b>         | 09 December 2005  |
| <b>Inspector</b>               | Jenny Scarlett / Paul Martin Kitchen  |
| <b>Setting Address</b>         | Acres of Fun Day Nursery, Priors Court Road, Hermitage, Thatcham, Berkshire, RG18 9SG |
| <b>Telephone number</b>        | 01635 203300  |
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| <b>Registered person</b>       | Acres of Fun Limited  |
| <b>Type of inspection</b>      | Integrated  |
| <b>Type of care</b>            | 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](http://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?

Acres of Fun opened in 2003. The nursery operates from a detached, self contained building in Hermitage, West Berkshire. A maximum of 60 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 07:00 to 19:00 for fifty one weeks of the year. All children share access to a secure, enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 109 children aged from 2 months to under 5 years on roll. Of

these 21 children receive funding for nursery education. The children come from a wide geographical area. The nursery supports a small number of children with special needs and who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 35 staff, including auxiliary staff. 30 staff, including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications. Two staff are working towards a recognised early years qualification. One staff member is further developing her child care qualification.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is outstanding.

The children's good health is promoted effectively by staff who demonstrate an excellent knowledge of the robust procedures for promoting health and hygiene. The children have a sound awareness of their own needs, suitable hand washing facilities and displays of positive images aid the children's development in their personal care and independence skills. They actively contribute to the development of health and care routines, tidying up and helping each other put their socks and slippers on for ballet is a good example. Excellent procedures, such as nappy changing are in place. The staff remind children to wash their hands after feeding the nursery rabbit and guinea pig. This practice sustains high levels of hygiene and helps to prevent the spread of infection.

The children and babies enjoy the varied, well-balanced and nutritious healthy meals. These comply with individual children's dietary requirements to ensure the children remain healthy. The meals are freshly prepared using fresh fruits and vegetables, some of which are grown by the children in the nursery garden. Menus are produced to give the parents information about meal choices. Mealtimes are relaxed and our social occasions. The children and adults sit together to enjoy their food and enjoy each others company. The babies and young children enjoy the one to one adult contact at meal times and are given time to enjoy and finish their food in a relaxed and calm environment.

The children are adept in their physical skills. They receive excellent opportunities for physical play through well-planned indoor and outdoor activities. This helps the children develop the confidence to enjoy moving with control. The children explore the extensive grounds with walks in the woods, growing their own vegetables and investigating their surroundings to look at nature. They use their bodies in various ways as they learn to balance on one leg and master the stretching routines in their ballet lessons. They are helped to understand how exercise helps them to stay healthy. The children confidently run, climb, balance, and swing on the garden equipment. They have good co-ordination and an awareness of others, particularly when riding bikes and wheeled toys outside. The children take part in a range of activities in all areas of learning, which help to develop both their fine and gross motor skills. They are able to control pencils, scissors and paintbrushes with a good range of activities to develop their manipulative skills.

## **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is good.

The environment is warm and welcoming to parents and their children, who are greeted individually on arrival. The individual welcome helps the children feel secure and encourages them to settle at the start of the session. Children use a good range of safe and developmentally appropriate resources. These are particularly well presented in the baby room. The resources and play equipment support, stimulate and challenge the younger children's individual development needs appropriately.

The indoor and outdoor play spaces are organised effectively. The staff create a child friendly environment which enables the children to explore and take risks while being appropriately supervised. The babies and young children sleep safely and comfortably and are frequently monitored. The older children know how to hold the banister when walking up and down the stairs. Through gentle encouragement the younger children learn to be gentle around the non-mobile babies. There is a good ratio of staff who are deployed effectively ensuring the children are safe in their surroundings. However, some staff do not consistently maintain the younger children's safety when moving them from one area of the room to the other.

The children are protected well by staff who demonstrate a sound understanding of the child protection policies and procedures. As a result they give good priority to safeguarding the children's welfare. The staff child ratios ensure that sufficient staff are on duty to meet the individual needs of the children throughout the day.

## **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is good.

The children are confident, relaxed and settled within the nursery, they enter the nursery happily. The children in the baby and younger toddler rooms develop good close relationships with the staff. They enjoy themselves and are helped to achieve. The staff are developing the Birth to Three Matters guidance well to provide a good and varied range of physical play experiences for babies and children under three. The children access a variety of activities, which staff thoughtfully plan and prepare to encourage them to develop skills and have fun. They have warm relationships with staff and benefit from the one to one care and key worker system receiving much individual attention. Babies enjoy varied activities to encourage their development. They explore a variety of hand held toys and musical resources, feeling and tasting them.

The children develop their walking skills, they experiment as they step around furniture and stand in the activity centre feeling, bouncing and exploring the various musical activities and sounds. Children in toddlers have access to a good range of activities. They paint buttons and a nose for the snowman and explore the texture of paint with their fingers. Their imaginative play is developing well as they explore removing the dolls clothes and cover them with blankets.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The children are confident in their environment. They arrive happily and quickly settle into self-chosen activities. The staff plan and provide a good range of activities that promote the children's learning. The staff are well qualified and demonstrate a clear understanding of the Foundation Stage. They use this knowledge to plan a broad range of experiences for all the children. The staff receive good opportunities for ongoing training and development, which underpins their knowledge and skills effectively to support the children.

Planning is clearly linked to the Early Learning Goals and identifies what the children are to learn from planned activities. As a result the children are making good progress. The staff use observations of the children's progress to complete assessment records. These are linked to the stepping-stones and used effectively to plan for each child's next stage.

The children have good opportunities to use their creativity. They dance confidently around the room and show good control and co-ordination as they balance on one leg. The children receive lots of praise and encouragement as they develop their coordination. They enthusiastically join in with the tunes when singing and enjoy story time. The children design and make Santa sacks and Christmas trees with good opportunities to link home to nursery as they cut out pictures of toys and put them in their sack. The children experience regular opportunities to develop their early maths skills and evidence shows they are progressing in this area. However, the staff do not routinely provide practical opportunities for the children to consolidate this learning.

The children have a good range of vocabulary. They use language confidently when talking to their peers and with the staff. This has a positive effect on their growing social skills and self-assurance. Some of the children confidently recognise their own names and those of others. Most of the 4 year-olds demonstrate good handwriting skills. They confidently write their own names on pieces of work and attempt to write for a purpose. These children demonstrate how they can hold a pencil correctly.

The children are beginning to be independent learners and make their own choices. However, staff do not utilise the opportunities to develop the children's independence further, for example, finding their own coats for outside play and serving refreshments at snack times. The lay out of the rooms inhibits opportunities for the children to access the toilet and craft room independently. The children respond well to the routine changes in the day, they follow clear guidelines and are aware of expectations such as tidying toys and resources away. The children develop a good awareness of their own needs and a respect for the needs of others. They are sensitive to the needs of others, the children also readily share toys and resources with each other.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is outstanding.

Partnership with parents is outstanding, the children feel valued in the setting, relationships are excellent. The play and education provision is organised and monitored well to ensure children have access to a varied range of activities. The children arrive at the setting happy and confident. The Younger children benefit from

the positive partnership staff have developed with the parents. Babies settle well because staff work closely with parents to ensure they follow their individual routine. The older children are welcomed as they self register and eagerly look forward to the days activities. The children's individual pegs and labelled drawers provide them with a sense of belonging as they store their pictures and personal possessions.

The parents and carers are well informed by the staff. They share relevant background information, play activities and discuss the children's specific needs. Clear and informative notice boards with relevant up to date information is accessible to all of the parents. The children benefit from the open door policy and two way sharing of information, with opportunities for parents to speak to staff to enhance their development and learning. Parents receive very good opportunities to contribute to the assessments made on their child and to be involved in their learning. As a result, the parents know how their child is progressing and have full access to the appropriate records.

The staff are proactive in ensuring the needs of all of the children are being met. They demonstrate an excellent knowledge of the individual needs of the children in their care. The children with special needs and those learning English as an additional language are safe and are fully included in the setting. This is because of the sensitive adult support and well-planned adaptations to resources and activities. Regular communication with parents contributes to children's well being and safety.

The special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) demonstrates sound knowledge of the fundamental principles of the code of practise. As a result, staff work together with parents, carers and other professional bodies to organise the environment and plan appropriate activities to ensure the children take part at a level appropriate to their needs. The children develop a positive attitude to others through varied positive images displayed around the setting. They visit the local community and develop a secure knowledge of the wider world. This positive approach fosters the children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

The children benefit exceptionally well from staff who adopt a consistent and positive approach to the management of their behaviour. As a result the children's behaviour is exemplary. They become aware of the routines and procedures and know what to expect in response to the routine changes in the session. The children know right from wrong, they are sensitive to the needs of others, readily share toys and resources and co-operate with each other.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

The provision for the quality of leadership and management is good. The staff who have appropriate early years qualifications and experience in caring for young children support the children's well being and education. Staff demonstrate a good understanding of their designated roles and responsibilities. Policies and procedures form part of the staff induction and help to ensure consistent provision for the children. The senior management team provide good opportunities for staff to undertake external and in-house training thus promoting their personal development.

This is used to help develop staff skills in organising provision that meets the individual needs of the children.

The children's care is enhanced by the setting's effective organisation. The staff observe the children's development and learning and keep records that help them to meet their needs. The children's records are openly shared with parents and their contributions valued to help them develop to their full potential. The staff understand and follow the settings policies and procedures to take appropriate steps to protect the children, promote their well-being and support their development. As a result, the setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

The senior management team have a strong vision for the nursery. Regular meetings are held, when staff are able to share their views and contribute to the organisation of the nursery. The staff work co-operatively to help the nursery run smoothly. They are supported by being well cared for in a homely, happy family atmosphere. The senior management team monitor and evaluate the provision in a constant process through the openness of the staff and management team. They clearly know the strengths and weaknesses of the provision and work hard to ensure the staff work effectively and have the relevant skills and qualifications to carry out their role. This results in a happy, consistent and focussed staff team who work effectively to meet the personal development and achievements of all the children.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

The previous care inspection identified the need for staff to review storage of equipment for younger children; to enable all the children to have opportunities to make choices and develop independence. The nursery have made improvements acting on the recommendation raised at the last care inspection. The children have good opportunities to choose and select resources in order to make choices, encourage their independence and develop their own ideas.

### **Complaints since the last inspection**

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted. Since registration in 2003 one complaint has been received regarding staff ratios not being met. A concern was also raised about the safety and security of the children on the premises. The complaint relates to Standard 2 Organisation and Standard 6 Safety. The complaint was investigated internally and followed up by a visit from a child care inspector. We asked the provider to investigate these concerns and report back to Ofsted within 7 working days. We asked the registered person to provide details of how ratios are adhered to and how they ensure Standard 6 is complied with. Ofsted is satisfied that the registered person has taken appropriate steps to address the concerns. The provider remains qualified for registration.

## **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 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):

- ensure the children's safety is promoted consistently when moving between areas of the nursery.

#### **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 opportunities for children to count and explore shape and measure in practical situations
- further develop opportunities to encourage children's independence skills.

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