



Office for Standards
in Education

NURSERY INSPECTION REPORT

URN 143076

DfES Number: 518494

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 12/10/2004
Inspector Name Sara Bailey

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Full Day Care
Setting Name Little Acorns Pre-School
Setting Address The Playing Fields Pavilion
Greenway
North Curry
Somerset
TA3 6NQ

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name Little Acorns Pre School 1027743

ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name Little Acorns Pre School
Address The Playing Fields Pavilion
Greenway, North Curry
Taunton
Somerset
TA3 6NQ

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public 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

Little Acorns Pre-school has been operating for over 25 years and meets in a pavilion on the village playing field at North Curry, Somerset. There is one main play room with kitchen and toilet facilities. Children have access to a small fully enclosed hard surface play area and the playing field. They also use the adjoining park for its apparatus.

The pre-school is open all day on a Tuesday and Thursday from 09:00 until 15:00 and mornings only on a Monday, Wednesday, Friday from 09:15 until 13:10. It is registered for 24 children aged two to five years. There are currently 29 children on roll, 18 of whom are funded three year olds. There are no funded four year olds attending at present. The group support children with Special Educational Needs. There are currently no children attending who speak English as an additional language.

Four part time staff are supported by a committee. Two hold level 3 qualifications, NVQ3 and DPP, two hold level two qualifications in early years, CPP.

The group are supported by the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership.

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

How effective is the nursery education?

Little Acorns Pre-school provides good quality nursery education overall which enables children to make generally good progress towards the early learning goals. Provision for their personal, social and emotional development is particularly well supported, as is communication, language and literacy. In these two areas of learning children are making very good progress.

The quality of teaching is generally good. Staff operate an effective key worker system which ensures children's individual needs are met well with appropriate activities to link with their individual play plans. There is a clear routine with planned topics. Staff have a good knowledge of the foundation stage curriculum and refer to their guidance throughout the session but some activities lack sufficient challenge for the more able child or sufficient resources for children to self select from. Planning and evaluations are not always meaningful or influence future activities. Staff are good role models and manage children's behaviour in a calm, caring, positive way that results in well behaved children.

The leadership and management is generally good. Childcare staff work well as a team, capitalizing on individual members strengths. They meet regularly to discuss issues. The committee are not involved in the day to day running of the group but offer support behind the scenes.

The partnership with parents is generally good. Parents are well informed about the provision through a prospectus, newsletters and notice board. A daily diary between home and preschool shares information about individual children. Parents are not involved to know what goes on, on a daily basis.

What is being done well?

- Children's personal, social and emotional development is promoted through staff as good role models and clear behaviour management. This results in confident, independent, well behaved children.
- Children thoroughly enjoy books and stories through excellent promotion of this by staff, spontaneously throughout the sessions and with regular group story times, that reinforces good listening skills.
- Children have unlimited access to mark make and increase their pencil control through fine motor activities using a selection of tools and equipment. This area is well supported by staff to develop communication, language and literacy skills.
- Staff operate an effective key worker system which ensures children are carefully monitored and their individual needs met through appropriate activities to meet the targets on their individual play plans.

What needs to be improved?

- ensuring sufficient resources are easily accessible to children to provide challenge, in particular physical development, role play, and knowledge of IT
- evaluation of activities to be meaningful and influence short/medium term planning
- developing mathematics into the daily routine and for children to see numerals displayed as labels to be meaningful.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Very good progress has been made since the last inspection in 2001. A totally new team are now in place and both key issues raised had been effectively addressed.

Children needed to be monitored to ensure that those who worked quickly were occupied at all times in activities. The organisation of the session is very much on freedom of choice for the child and self selecting activities. Children no longer sit as a group to complete a task, so individual needs are monitored and more effectively met.

Parents needed to be encouraged to be involved in their children's learning. They are given good information in a variety of ways and invited into the group for open days but attendance is poor. A daily diary shares information about the child between parents and staff. They are informed about the topics and ways to link home and pre-school.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children are independent and self select from activities provided. They are involved in packing away and respond immediately to a triangle being played to gain their attention, stop and listen. Children are very happy and settled. They show kindness to each other and form good relationships within the group. Children are very well behaved and respond positively to staffs praise and encouragement, showing pride in their achievements.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Very Good

Children communicate well with their peers and staff. They have excellent listening skills, with the ability to sit for long periods of time to enjoy stories that are planned group activities as well as many spontaneous opportunities that are child initiated. They show a real love of books. Three year olds can find their name cards with ease and are using Jolly Phonics books to link sounds and letters. Worksheets are used but appropriately for pencil control activities and identifying letters.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children are beginning to count to five and beyond when supported with specific activities but are not yet routinely counting or identifying numbers in their play. Children are beginning to compare sizes in building towers and enjoy playing with mathematical equipment which is introducing practical problem solving, although they are unable to complete activities without support yet. They enjoy action rhymes that include counting but numerals are not displayed around the room to reinforce.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Generally Good

Children study themselves, their differences and similarities through meaningful activities such as looking at the colour of their eyes and charting their findings. They explore their local community with visits and enjoy a wide range of resources that promote equal opportunities as well as celebrating festivals from other cultures. Children have very limited access to explore technology.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children are beginning to experiment with tools and equipment to develop their fine motor skills. They enjoy physical play inside and out and are developing good spatial awareness, moving with skill and imagination, for example being animals. More able children have insufficient opportunities to extend their physical skills, as the local park is only used occasionally to provide this challenge. Children are learning about their bodies and how they react to weather, activity and healthy eating.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children experiment with material for dressing up in and play with dolls alongside other activities, but resources for role play are limited. A large multi-cultural boy puppet that interacts with children at circle time is enjoyed and they are beginning to use their own puppets with voices. Craft activities are enjoyed by children, some are adult led others allow for free expression. Children participate enthusiastically in action songs where they sing and play a role at the front of the group.

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

- increase children's access to resources that promotes and provides sufficient challenge in physical development, IT and role play
- develop ways to introduce mathematics into everyday routines and displays
- ensure evaluations of activities are meaningful and influence future planning.

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.