



Office for Standards
in Education

COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN 511205

DfES Number: 511374

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 11/03/2005
Inspector Name Carol Patricia Willett

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Sessional Day Care
Setting Name The Acorns Nursery School
Setting Address 11 Wittenham Avenue
Tilehurst
Reading
Berkshire
RG31 5LN

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name Mrs Janet Wilson

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality and standard of day care in accordance with the National Standards for Under Eights Day Care and Childminding; and 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

The Acorns Nursery School is a privately owned provision which opened in 1984. It operates from domestic premises situated in a residential area of Tilehurst in Berkshire. Children have access to all areas on the ground floor of the home. There are suitable toilet and nappy changing facilities available and a fully enclosed garden for outside play. The nursery school serves families from the local community and surrounding areas.

A maximum of 21 children between two and five years of age may attend at any one time. There are currently 39 children, aged from 2.5 to 4 years on roll. Of these, 32 receive nursery education funding. Children may attend for a variety of sessions. The setting currently supports some children with special needs and also makes provision for children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery opens five days a week during term time only and offers sessional care. Morning sessions are from 09.30 - 12.30 Monday to Friday and cater for children aged 4 to 5 years of age. Afternoon sessions are held from 13.30 - 16.00 (Monday to Friday) for children aged 3.5 years. Sessions for 3 year olds are offered on Tuesday and Friday afternoons from 14.00 - 16.00.

Seven members of staff work with the children, three of whom are qualified teachers. Six members of staff hold valid first aid certificates.

The nursery school receives support from "West Berkshire Early Years and Childcare".

How good is the Day Care?

The Acorns Nursery School offers good quality care to children. Staff provide a welcoming environment and make use of the space available to them although the accommodation does pose some constraints. The garden is used well to offer opportunities for different types of play and learning. Children have access to a

variety of age appropriate play materials and make choices from those on offer during the session. Staff are deployed appropriately and work together as a team to ensure children are well supported. Minimum qualification levels are met. Required documentation is in place.

Staff are aware of their responsibility to ensure children's safety at all times and they supervise children closely. A risk assessment is in place although this is not yet sufficiently detailed. Staff follow good hygiene practices and encourage these with children. They are aware of the importance of seeking information about allergies and dietary needs. Children have access to drinks and bring snacks from home. The provision of healthy items is actively encouraged. Staff are secure in their understanding of issues relating to child protection.

There is a happy atmosphere evident at the nursery. Children are well occupied and enjoy the different activities and play experiences provided which effectively support their physical, intellectual, emotional and social development. Staff treat children as individuals and with equal concern and there are good procedures in place to support children with special needs. Staff have a consistent approach to behaviour management and act as positive role models.

Staff form effective partnerships with parents. They seek written consent for all aspects of care and share information about children's progress and achievements in a variety of ways. Parents are able to share in the life of the nursery and be actively involved in their children's learning. They provide very positive feedback about staff and the nursery provision.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Two recommendations were identified at the setting's previous day care inspection. These related to reviewing the risk assessment for the outside play area, including use of play equipment and reviewing documentation to cover all criteria of the National Standards, including outings, incident records and keeping a daily record of staff working.

The setting has made very good progress in developing its documentation to ensure this has regard for the criteria of the National Standards. A daily record of staff working with children is in place, as are records of incidents. The registered owner has also devised a written policy for outings and staff seek written consent to take children off site.

Generally good progress has been made in developing the risk assessment for the outside play area and use of play equipment. The setting last reviewed its risk assessment in January 2005. The registered owner has purchased crash mats for use with the outside climbing frame by way of improving existing safety arrangements and she has monitored children's use of the climbing apparatus. This has highlighted further concerns as staff have noticed that children tend to be far more adventurous in their exploration of the climbing frame when the mats are in place, jumping on to them from some height. The risk assessment does not identify how staff intend to respond to this further identified hazard and this has therefore

been carried forward to this inspection as part of the further development of the provision's risk assessment.

What is being done well?

- The range of play materials available within the nursery is very good. These are interesting and offer challenge, with some reflecting positive images of diversity to help children gain awareness of the wider world in which we live. Staff also make their own resources and they give good attention to detail, for example, in the way they set up role play areas. Children enjoy exploring the train station set up in the garden. They pretend to be trains and travel along the railway lines chalked all around the garden. They use real tickets and act out the role of train guards as they wave the flags provided.
- Staff and children enjoy trusting relationships. Staff are warm, caring and interested. They facilitate children's play and learning and encourage them to help within the group by allocating everyone a daily task. These are varied and interesting and children take their responsibilities seriously.
- The nursery offers parents good opportunities to feel involved in their children's learning. They receive informative newsletters about what children are doing, with suggestions for activities they might like to do with their children at home. They are invited into the group to share their expertise and interests with children and can help on outings. The registered owner also provides support for parents by offering parent classes on ways of managing children's behaviour.
- Staff have attended child protection training. They know about child abuse and neglect and how to respond appropriately when necessary. This ensures that they will act in the best interests of children.
- Staff have a calm, gentle manner and use praise and positive language to encourage children's good behaviour. Children share and take turns and behave well.
- Staff take steps to provide a welcoming environment. The display of children's artwork helps them gain awareness that their efforts are valued and has a positive effect on their developing self-esteem.

What needs to be improved?

- further development of the nursery school's risk assessment to ensure that it is sufficiently detailed and systems to ensure staff undertake regular checks to identify potential hazards and take steps to address these.

PREVIOUS COMPLAINTS (This section applies only to inspections carried out from September 2004. The complaint record relates to complaints from the last inspection or 1st April 2004 whichever is later.)

There are no complaints to report.

Outcome of the inspection

Good

CONDITIONS OF REGISTRATION

All registered persons must comply with all conditions of registration included on his/her certificate of registration.

As a result of this inspection conditions of registration have been imposed / varied / removed and a new certificate of registration will be issued.

WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE NEXT?**The Registered Person should have regard to the following recommendations by the time of the next inspection**

Std	Recommendation
6	develop the existing risk assessment further to ensure that it is sufficiently detailed and undertake regular checks to ensure staff identify potential hazards and take steps to address these.

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

How effective is the nursery education?

Provision at The Acorns Nursery School is acceptable and of high quality. Children are making very good progress to the Early Learning Goals.

Teaching is very good. Staff plan a range of challenging activities covering all areas of development using some good teaching strategies to reinforce and consolidate learning. They have good questioning skills to extend children's thinking. Staff are friendly and form caring relationships with the children giving them lots of praise and encouragement enabling them to be well behaved, confident and secure.

Leadership and management is very good. Staff are effectively deployed and work well together as a team using the individuals interest and skills to support children's learning with each developing an expertise for a different area of learning. They attend training for their area and cascade the training to the rest of the team. The manager and deputy are committed to improving knowledge and skills. There is a annual development plan in place to ensure improvement is ongoing. Staff have annual appraisals to monitor performance and they critically evaluate the daily activities. They meet monthly to share planning for their curriculum areas and discuss any issues that arise.

The partnership with parents is very good. Parents have a positive regard for the staff and the provision, feeling the staff are friendly, caring and approachable. Most parents feel well informed about their children's progress. They share information informally daily and at planned termly meeting where they discuss the next steps for learning. Parents receive good information about the nursery school via newsletters and the notice board. They are given information about useful websites. Children take books home to read. Parents come in to share work roles.

What is being done well?

- Staff plan and provide an interesting range of activities to interest and challenge the children. they pay great attention to detail when they plan the role play areas providing items to enhance play such as real train tickets for the station.
- Staff use good teaching strategies and act as good role models using positive language and praise to ensure children behave well. They use every opportunity to reinforce and consolidate learning.
- Children are confident and secure. They take turns and share resources showing good manners saying please and thank you. They join in activities with enthusiasm.
- Partnerships with parents are very good. Parents have positive regard for the staff and their children's learning. They are actively involved as they send in items to support topics and share their skills for example showing children

what air stewards do.

What needs to be improved?

- opportunities for children to independently select resources other than creative materials to further develop independence skills
- planning to show how children will be grouped.

What has improved since the last inspection?

At the last inspection the nursery school were given two actions regarding planning to reflect grouping of children and their differing learning needs and to review and develop children's progress records to more clearly reflect the children's individual progress.

Good progress has been made in this area. Planning shows how activities can be adapted for children learning at different rates and staff ensure suitable resources are available to extend activities. Activities are highlighted to show which aspects will be suitable for the younger children who attend the afternoon sessions. Local authority profiles are being used and show clear links to the early learning goals. These are kept up to date and parents are informed of children's progress at termly meetings. Staff also keep notebooks where they record observations of children to inform the profiles. Individual work books show children's progress over time.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children are confident and secure. They form good relationships and they readily adapt to changes in the session helping to pack away. They join in well with activities showing enthusiasm and excitement. They are mostly well behaved and can share and take turns passing resources to share during craft activities. They are polite and well mannered. Self esteem and a sense of responsibility is well fostered as they complete their daily jobs to feed the birds or help with snacks.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Very Good

Children are confident to talk and approach adults to share what they know and ask for help. They develop good phonic awareness with the weekly letter saying words that begin with the letter T. They continue to explore words spontaneously during the session. They develop letter recognition with interesting activities as they fish for the letters in the water tray. Children write their names some have very good pencil control. They sit and listen well recognising chords to songs on the piano.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children can count to ten and beyond counting children at group time. Counting is reinforced during the session. They develop calculations skills through number songs and at planned activities where they predict how many cups of rice are needed to fill a container. Children use positional language. They know basic shapes recognising them during craft activities and take photos of shapes for display when on local walks.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Very Good

Children explore sand and water daily with a variety of resources to enhance learning for example floating letters to fish for letter of the week. Children explore nature and living things. They do a bird watch in the garden and observe silk worms and butterflies emerge. They care for the pets feeding the rabbit. They grow flowers and vegetables in the garden. Visitors to the group enhance children's knowledge of adult roles. They use the computer to support learning.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children move safely and confidently around the nursery taking care in the limited space. They climb, balance and slide using the equipment in the garden. They manoeuvre ride on toys with skill. They kick and catch balls. They develop good manipulative skills using a variety of tools including scissors, rolling pins and hole punches. They manipulate playdough to make models. Children know they need coats to keep warm outside and they wash their hands before eating because of germs.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children explore colour and texture as they paint at the easel, make models from recycled materials and playdough. They make collages for attractive wall displays using a variety of materials. They enjoy role play looking after babies at the hospital and being station masters in the playhouse in the garden. Staff pay great attention to detail in role play areas. Children enjoy singing from memory, they enjoy making London Bridge from silly things like jelly and glitter singing their suggestions.

Children's spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is fostered appropriately.

OUTCOME OF THE INSPECTION

The provision is acceptable and is of high quality. Children are making very 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

There are no significant weaknesses to report, but considerations should be given to improving the following:

- There are no significant weaknesses but consideration should be given to the following;
- consider ways children can be given more choice in independently selecting from the wide range of resources
- develop activity plans to show more detail of how children will be grouped.

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.

SUMMARY OF NATIONAL STANDARDS

STANDARD 1 - SUITABLE PERSON

Adults providing day care, looking after children or having unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so.

STANDARD 2 - ORGANISATION

The registered person meets required adult: child ratios, ensures that training and qualifications requirements are met and organises space and resources to meet the children's needs effectively.

STANDARD 3 - CARE, LEARNING AND PLAY

The registered person meets children's individual needs and promotes their welfare. They plan and provide activities and play opportunities to develop children's emotional, physical, social and intellectual capabilities.

STANDARD 4 - PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

The premises are safe, secure and suitable for their purpose. They provide adequate space in an appropriate location, are welcoming to children and offer access to the necessary facilities for a range of activities which promote their development.

STANDARD 5 - EQUIPMENT

Furniture, equipment and toys are provided which are appropriate for their purpose and help to create an accessible and stimulating environment. They are of suitable design and condition, well maintained and conform to safety standards.

STANDARD 6 - SAFETY

The registered person takes positive steps to promote safety within the setting and on outings and ensures proper precautions are taken to prevent accidents.

STANDARD 7 - HEALTH

The registered person promotes the good health of children and takes positive steps to prevent the spread of infection and appropriate measures when they are ill.

STANDARD 8 - FOOD AND DRINK

Children are provided with regular drinks and food in adequate quantities for their needs. Food and drink is properly prepared, nutritious and complies with dietary and religious requirements.

STANDARD 9 - EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

The registered person and staff actively promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice for all children.

STANDARD 10 - SPECIAL NEEDS (INCLUDING SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES)

The registered person is aware that some children may have special needs and is

proactive in ensuring that appropriate action can be taken when such a child is identified or admitted to the provision. Steps are taken to promote the welfare and development of the child within the setting in partnership with the parents and other relevant parties.

STANDARD 11 - BEHAVIOUR

Adults caring for children in the provision are able to manage a wide range of children's behaviour in a way which promotes their welfare and development.

STANDARD 12 - WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS AND CARERS

The registered person and staff work in partnership with parents and to meet the needs of the children, both individually and as a group. Information is shared.

STANDARD 13 - CHILD PROTECTION

The registered person complies with local child protection procedures approved by the Area Child Protection Committee and ensures that all adults working and looking after children in the provision are able to put the procedures into practice.

STANDARD 14 - DOCUMENTATION

Records, policies and procedures which are required for the efficient and safe management of the provision, or to promote the welfare, care and learning of children are maintained. Records about individual children are shared with the child's parent.