

Acorns Day Nursery

Acorns Childrens Centre, Lostock Lane, Lostock, BOLTON, BL6 4BL

Inspection date	12/09/2013
Previous inspection date	03/03/2010

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

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision is satisfactory

- The nursery is overseen by a knowledgeable area manager. She ensures practitioners observe children closely and make regular accurate assessments of children's progress, including the progress check at age two. This ensures children who may need additional support are quickly identified.
- Parents are well informed about what their children are doing at the nursery. There are informative displays and files about how the nursery operates. Displays show what children have been doing and why they have been doing it.
- Children serve themselves and make healthy choices about what they eat and drink. This allows them to gain confidence in making decisions and encourages them to take responsibility for their own well-being.

It is not yet good because

- Some practitioners do not have a good understanding of the characteristics of effective learning and take too little account of what children already know and can do. This means children are sometimes not well motivated and do not make rapid progress towards the early learning goals.
- Staffing arrangements are not always well organised. This means occasionally the needs of children are not well met.
- The outdoor area is not used effectively for children aged under two years to support their growing physical skills and their natural impulse to explore.

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.

Inspection activities

- The inspector had a tour of the premises and discussed how the nursery works.
- The inspector talked to the regional manager, acting deputy manager, practitioners and parents throughout the inspection.
- The inspector observed children at play in each of the rooms, both indoors and outdoors and talked to children and practitioners.
- The inspector discussed lunch and snack time arrangements and also watched children having lunch and snacks.
- The inspector undertook a joint observation with the Early Years Professional and the regional manager.
- The inspector examined a range of documents and records.

Inspector

Caroline Midgley

Full Report

Information about the setting

Acorns Day Nursery was registered in 2009 on the Early Years Register. It is situated in converted premises in the Lostock area of Bolton, close to a large retail park, train station and motorway network. It is one of 34 nurseries owned by Treetops Nurseries Limited. The nursery serves the local area and is accessible to all children. There are three enclosed areas available for outdoor play.

The nursery employs eight members of childcare staff. Of these, six hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 2 or above, including one with Early Years Professional Status. The nursery also has four relief staff and a cook. The nursery opens Monday to Friday all year round. It is open between 7am and 6pm. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 66 children attending, who are in the early years age group. The nursery provides funded early education for three- and four-year-old children. It supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The nursery receives support from the local authority.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- ensure staffing arrangements meet the needs of all children at all times, through accurate monitoring of practitioners' attendance and put in place effective contingency arrangements should staff not be available for work at short notice
- monitor practitioners quality of teaching and provide coaching to ensure all practitioners' understand the learning and development requirements of the Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, in particular methods and techniques to ignite children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning.

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

- improve the outdoor area for the youngest children, so that they have rich opportunities to explore and practise their growing physical skills.

Inspection judgements

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

Children make satisfactory progress in their learning and development. This is because the nursery is overseen by a knowledgeable area manager, who knows how children learn. She ensures practitioners observe children closely and track their progress. Some practitioners are beginning to consider children's needs and interests when providing activities and experiences for children. However, teaching is variable as some practitioners focus on planning generally age-appropriate activities rather than planning for individual children's interests or stage of development. This means some practitioners take too little account of what children already know and can do and some children do not make rapid progress towards the early learning goals.

The nursery is generally well resourced. Children have opportunities to choose from a good selection of resources and equipment that will help them develop skills and knowledge in all areas of learning. For example, the newly refurbished outdoor areas provide good opportunities for children who are over two years of age to develop physical skills, as they climb and balance on the challenging log climbing equipment. They have opportunities to find out more about their world as they explore what happens if they pour water down pipes and they learn about living things as they help set up a bug hotel for insects to live in. Practitioners also encourage children to explore and develop their imagination and mathematical understanding as they go on a 'bear hunt' under, over and through the outdoor equipment. However, the outdoor area for children aged under two is too small and cluttered to allow the youngest children to practice crawling and walking and find out about their world.

Parents are very well informed about what their children are doing at the nursery. Key practitioners talk to parents as they drop off and pick up their children. There are informative displays and files about how the nursery operates. Displays show what children have been doing and why they have been doing it. For example, a display illustrates how the nursery links with other organisations in the local area to extend children's understanding of their world. Each child is also provided with a file of photographs and observations that provide a good record of their progress at the nursery. These records keep parents well informed about what their child has been doing at the nursery. They also include regular accurate assessments of children's learning and development and include the progress check at age two. This helps parents and practitioners quickly identify children who may need additional support to help them make appropriate progress in the prime areas of learning. Transition forms in the files summarise important information for adults who will be caring for children as they move on. This helps ensure children continue to make progress as they move on to the next stage in their education.

Practitioners understand that children learn as they play and explore. However, not all practitioners know how to engage and motivate children well and activities do not tend to focus closely enough on each child's stage of development and interests. Some practitioners do not have a good understanding of the characteristics of effective learning. For example, practitioners do not play alongside children and discuss what they are doing often enough. They tend to ask too many questions for which they have an answer in mind. For example, a practitioner pretends to bake cakes with playdough. She asks the children, 'Where shall we put these now?' A child answers, 'In the oven', but the

practitioner expects the answer, 'In the bun cases'. This means children miss opportunities to develop their language and thinking skills.

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

The environment is generally spacious and attractive. Children can choose from a variety of activities and resources that help promote their development in all areas of learning. There are quiet areas, such as cosy book corners, where children can relax. All children have easy and regular access to the well planned and generally attractive outdoor areas for vigorous play. This means that children can develop their physical skills and get fresh air and exercise. However, the outdoor space currently used by babies does not always meet their needs well, so that they can practise their growing physical skills. Practitioners generally care for children well and children develop secure relationships with their key persons. Practitioners skilfully support children's transitions both in the nursery and to other settings and school. Parents are actively involved in this process and this helps children feel safe and secure and increases their sense of well-being. Parents are very pleased about the care their children receive and the support they receive as families. Parents spoken to during the inspection are confident their children are safe and happy at this nursery.

Children are encouraged to be independent and are learning to begin to take responsibility for their own welfare and safety. For example, they practise the fire drill so that they know what to do in an emergency. Children enjoy a wide range of healthy meals and snacks. They make healthy choices about what they eat and drink and competently serve their own food at lunchtime. If they are thirsty children pour themselves a drink of water. This allows their preferences to be respected and enables them to gain confidence in making decisions. Children learn appropriate hygiene practices and practitioners talk to them to help them understand why it is important to wash their hands before meals. Children behave well because practitioners are good role models and they encourage children to take turns and share.

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

This inspection was carried out because of concerns relating to the suitability of practitioners working with children. Recruitment arrangements were not robust, which meant that some practitioners were not sufficiently checked to ensure they are suitable before working with children. The company has now introduced robust systems that ensure all practitioners are fully checked before starting work at the nursery. This helps keep children safe. The nursery monitors children's safety. For example, the nursery manager signs all accident records, which are then analysed centrally by the company. This ensures any patterns of accidents are identified and causes addressed very quickly.

The nursery is overseen by a knowledgeable and experienced regional manager, who visits this nursery on a weekly basis. She has a clear and well-defined vision about what the nursery needs to do to improve the provision it offers children. The nursery also receives advice and support from the local authority. However, numerous recent changes

in managers and deputy managers have resulted in slow progress in improving teaching and learning. The nursery has a temporary manager in place until a permanent manager can be appointed and the nursery now receives regular visits from an Early Years Professional, who is based at another nursery in the same group. The nursery has not made sufficiently good progress regarding a previous recommendation to review staffing arrangements. There are systems in place to monitor staffing ratios and ensure children are appropriately supervised. However, these systems are not always well maintained to ensure that appropriate contingency plans are in place in the event of practitioners' absence. This means occasionally the needs of children are not as effectively met.

All practitioners consistently give high priority to the safety of children. They have a sound knowledge of safeguarding and know what to do should they have a concern about a child in their care. Risk assessments are thorough and practitioners carry out daily opening checks to ensure the learning spaces are safe and secure for children. Risk assessments are displayed in each room. They are reviewed annually or as a hazard arises, or a risk changes. An outdoor play risk assessment is carried out by practitioners, before each outdoor play session.

Most practitioners hold appropriate qualifications, including first aid and the company regularly audits practitioners practice. However, this process does not monitor practitioners' quality of teaching to ensure children benefit from effective teaching practices. As a result, children make satisfactory rather than good progress in their learning. Children's individual progress is monitored closely by each child's key person, the room leaders and is overseen by the manager. They regularly sample children's records and each term review the progress of all individual children and that of various groups. This enables the manager to quickly identify any additional support children may need to help them meet learning and development targets. The nursery has a special educational needs coordinator, who works closely with the local authority additional needs team, to ensure children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported. The nursery works closely with other agencies, for example, speech and language specialists to provide extra support for children.

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	EY399877
Local authority	Bolton
Inspection number	935359
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 5
Total number of places	82
Number of children on roll	66
Name of provider	Treetops Nurseries Limited
Date of previous inspection	03/03/2010
Telephone number	01204 667251

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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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