

# Acorn Community Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	109665
<b>Inspection date</b>	31 October 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Helen Mary Ball
<b>Setting Address</b>	Lockerley Village Hall, Lockerley, Romsey, Hampshire, SO51 0JG
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<b>Registered person</b>	Acorn Community Pre-School
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	Sessional 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 satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are inadequate - notice of action to improve.

### WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Acorn Community Pre-school opened in 1984 and operates from three rooms in the village community centre in the Lockerley area of Hampshire. A maximum of 24 children may attend the setting at any one time. The setting is open each weekday from 09:30 to 12:00 for 36 weeks of the year.

There are currently 19 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 11 children receive funding for early education. The setting currently supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. There are no children attending who speak English as an additional language.

The setting employs five members of staff. Of these, three 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 satisfactory.

Children's health is underpinned by the effective maintenance of documentation such as accident and medication records. They are protected in the event of minor accidents because all staff hold a first aid qualification. Children are protected from the spread of infection because staff ensure that children wash their hands after using the toilet and before eating. Children's physical development is promoted because they have daily opportunities to play in the fresh air. However, planning for outside play lacks sufficient detail and does not provide suitable challenge for all children. Children's small muscle control is promoted through activities such as threading and lacing.

Children are nourished because they are offered a healthy snack. They enjoy the freedom of choosing their own snack time at the café-style snack bar where they are offered apples, cheese, raisins and breadsticks.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children settle quickly because the staff are friendly. The environment is bright and clean, although the heating is not consistently switched on and this means that some children become cold when carrying out seated activities. Children play with an adequate range of toys and equipment which cover all areas of learning. Staff have organised some of these resources so that they are readily accessible which means that children can self-select. This helps them to develop independence.

Children are secure because staff supervise them closely. For example, children are accompanied to the toilets at all times which means that children cannot wander unaccompanied through the building. Alarms have been fitted to some fire exits and a new gate prevents children from leaving the premises. Children's safety is promoted because staff carry out daily risk assessments both indoors and outside.

Children are safeguarded because the setting has a child protection procedure and a member of staff has attended child protection training.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are happy and well cared for. They are broadly occupied and enjoy exploring their environment. Staff are effectively deployed and this means that they can offer children support when necessary. Staff know children well and are friendly. As a result, children are secure in approaching adults. Staff offer children encouragement and praise and this raises children's confidence and self-esteem. Children have access to an adequate range of resources, although use of information technology is limited.

## NURSERY EDUCATION

The quality of teaching and learning is inadequate. Children come into the setting eager to play and explore their environment. They play together and form clear friendships. However,

staff have not received training in the Foundation Stage and this means that activities do not always excite and challenge children sufficiently. For example, the setting does not have a consistent approach to developing writing, reading and the linking of sounds and letters. Children have some opportunities to recognise their names in print as they use their name cards to register. Children are not offered daily opportunities to hear and share stories, although they do take library books home to share with their parents.

Children recognise and can name basic two-dimensional shapes, however, there are insufficient opportunities for children to recognise numbers in the environment or to count on a regular basis. Teaching is inconsistent and this means that some staff do not extend children's understanding of numbers through practical activities. Children are inquisitive and they enjoy using magnets as they search for objects that are buried under rice. Some staff are skilled at asking children questions to extend their thinking. Children have few opportunities to use technology on a regular basis. Children learn about festivals through planned activities, and taste foods from around the world at snack time. For example, children taste naan bread. Children enjoy their creative development. They benefit from opportunities to explore paint and play dough, and staff allow children to complete work to their own satisfaction. This helps children to experience a sense of a job well done. Children have some opportunities for imaginative play. They enjoy role play activities, although these are not available on a daily basis.

Staff are developing a continuous curriculum with children having a free choice of activities throughout the session. However, an overview of the provision is not adequately maintained which means that children do not always access the whole curriculum, and presentation of activities is not always exciting and interesting enough to encourage children to take part. Planning of activities covers all areas of learning but lacks detail. This means that it does not take account of children's individual stages of development and lacks challenge in some areas. Staff maintain assessment records on children and use these to identify children's next steps in learning. However, these are not always up-to-date. The supervisor and staff have identified this as an area for improvement, but changes have not yet been made.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's self-esteem is high because staff listen to, and respect what children say. Children learn about festivals from around the world and they taste a range of foods at snack time. However, children do not have regular access to resources which reflect positive images of society. This restricts their ability to learn about the wider world. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are welcome at the setting. Children behave well and are eager to please; they share and take turns and show concern for each other. Children's spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is fostered.

The setting works closely with the committee and parents are welcome to help within the group on a rota basis. Parents receive a prospectus when their children start at the setting, although this is currently out-of-date and does not provide current information about staff. Parents are kept informed about forthcoming themes through newsletters. The complaints procedure and record of complaints is in place in accordance with the regulations.

Partnership with parents is inadequate. Although parents find staff friendly and approachable, they are not invited to share in their children's assessment records and are not consulted when staff plan children's next steps in learning. Parents are kept informed about forthcoming themes

through newsletters, but displays of planning on the parent notice board is not current. This makes it difficult for parents to support their children's learning. Parents state that they would welcome the opportunity to meet with staff on a regular basis to discuss their child's progress.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

The setting meets the needs of the children for whom it provides. Children are effectively safeguarded because the setting follows robust recruitment and vetting procedures. The committee supports staff training and ensure that bank staff cover staff absences. For example, while the new supervisor is currently working towards NVQ 3, the setting continues to maintain a high staff:child ratio. Space is suitably organised so that children can move and play freely without restriction, and activities are accessible to all children. However, in cold weather, the environment is not always warm enough. The setting has a wide range of resources which cover all areas of learning, although they are not always available to children at each session; this means that children's learning is sometimes restricted.

The setting has developed a wide range of policies and procedures, and all regulatory paperwork is in place. However, some policies are out-of-date and are not currently relevant to the setting. This means that some information is misleading.

Leadership and management is inadequate. The setting has undergone several management changes which has impacted on the consistency and quality of children's education. Staff are hard working and work well as a team. They are approachable and friendly to both parents and children. The new supervisor is enthusiastic; both she and the staff team have a range of ideas to improve the quality of education. However, these have not yet impacted on the quality of the provision. The supervisor and staff have not received training on the Foundation Stage and this means that they are not always aware of the most effective ways to deliver the curriculum.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last care inspection, a recommendation was made for the setting to expand the procedure for a lost child. This procedure has now been extended which means that all staff are aware of the procedures to follow should a child become lost. In addition the setting was asked to implement the use of an incident book to record significant concerns and to obtain parental consent for emergency medical advice or treatment. These recommendations have been followed which means that children are safeguarded in the event of incidents and emergencies.

At the last nursery education inspection, the setting was asked to implement a system to evaluate the effectiveness of the planning and assessment to ensure children are making progress towards the early learning goals in all areas of learning and to ensure that activities are delivered at the right level. Although this recommendation was addressed immediately following the last inspection, this has again become an area for improvement since the changes to the setting management.

The setting was asked to develop the book corner to encourage children to choose books and provide examples of written words to help them in their mark-making. Although the setting provides a good range of books, there are few examples of written words to help children in their mark-making. This is, therefore, still an area for improvement.

A recommendation was also made to increase opportunities for children to operate independently within the setting and select resources for themselves. The group has made progress in this area and some resources are now accessible in trays so that children's independence is encouraged.

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

Since the last inspection 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 parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

## **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 satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are inadequate - notice of action to improve.

### **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 that the temperature of the setting is maintained so that children carrying out seated activities are comfortable
- ensure that children have regular access to information technology and resources that reflect positive images of society
- ensure that information in policies and procedures is up-to-date and relevant to this setting.

#### **The quality and standards of the nursery education**

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education, the registered person **must** take the following actions:

- develop staff knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage
- develop and implement systems to monitor and evaluate the provision to ensure that children access all areas of the curriculum to enable them to make sound progress towards the early learning goals
- ensure children's assessment records reflect children's capabilities and are used to inform the planning and successfully promote all children's progress through the stepping stones
- ensure that parents are invited to contribute to children's assessment records and the planning of children's next steps in learning so that they are fully involved in their children's education

- provide frequent opportunities for children to link sounds and letters so that they can develop their knowledge of phonics, to experience shared story telling and reading, and to experience writing for a purpose

These actions are set out in a *notice of action to improve* and must be completed by the date specified in the notice.

The Department for Education and Skills and the local authority have been informed.

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)