

# Acorn Day Nursery (Castlethorpe)

Inspection report for early years provision

---

**Unique reference number** 141751  
**Inspection date** 07/05/2009  
**Inspector** Sheila Dawn Flounders

**Setting address** 17 South Street, Castlethorpe, Milton Keynes,  
Buckinghamshire, MK19 7EL  
**Telephone number** 01908 510309  
**Email** castlethorpe@acornchildcare.co.uk  
**Type of setting** Childcare on non-domestic premises

## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

The provider must provide a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must provide a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Childcare (Inspection) Regulations 2008 regulations 9 and 10).

The setting also makes provision for children older than the early years age group which is registered on the voluntary and/or compulsory part(s) of the Childcare Register. This report does not include an evaluation of that provision, but a comment about compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Register is included in Annex B.

## Description of the setting

Acorn Day Nursery is one of six nurseries run by Acorn Childcare Limited. It opened in 1989 and operates from ground floor rooms in a converted chapel. It is accessible inside, with steps to gain entry. Children have access to an enclosed outdoor play area with the playground from the local school also available at times. The nursery is situated in the centre of the village of Castlethorpe, Buckinghamshire. It is open each weekday from 07.30 to 18.15 for 52 weeks of the year, closing only for bank holidays.

The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register. A maximum of 36 children may attend the nursery at any one time. There are currently 59 children aged from birth to under five years on roll, some in part-time places, including those in receipt of early education places. The nursery currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The nursery also operates an out-of-school club for older children using additional premises in the neighbouring school.

There are 12 members of staff working directly with the children, seven of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications to at least National Vocational Qualification Level 2 and four are working towards relevant qualifications. The nursery receives support from the Local Authority.

## Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the provision is good. The children are happy and interested in what they are doing, which is reflected in the quality of their involvement at activities, enabling them to progress well in their learning and development. Robust systems, documentation and policies ensure that most of the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) are met and that all aspects of children's welfare are well promoted, particularly their positive contribution to the setting. Management and staff work especially well together towards the nursery ethos of caring for children according to their individual needs and as a result each child is respected, listened to and their preferences adhered to. Positive relationships with parents form the basis of strong two-way communication which ensures information about children's needs is updated. The nursery has begun to effectively plan for ongoing development through self evaluation and demonstrate a strong capacity to maintain continuous improvement.

## What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- ensure that all staff take the necessary steps to prevent the spread of infection, particularly when feeding the youngest children
- develop consistency with entries to assessment records so that children's next steps are identified across all areas of learning and ages to provide

secure evidence of their ongoing progress.

## **The leadership and management of the early years provision**

Managers' monitor and evaluate the overall provision effectively, ensuring ratios are maintained, staff deployment is appropriate and that necessary records, policies and procedures are in place, up-to-date and easily accessible to staff and parents. They ensured that recommendations from the last inspection were acted on, improving the provision for children, and demonstrate a commitment to continue to do so. Comprehensive risk assessments and regular premises checks help keep children safe by raising staff awareness and alerting them to potential hazards, and include a review following accidents. Thorough systems for staff recruitment, vetting and induction ensure that those working with the children are suitable and very good access to ongoing training and support from management enables staff to continue developing their knowledge and skills. Children are further safeguarded because staff understand their role in protecting children, have a sound knowledge of the symptoms of child abuse and know what action to take if they have concerns about a child.

Staff make good use of space within the premises, resources available and their time to provide children with a wealth of positive experiences, whilst ensuring that the frequent movement around the premises is managed with the minimum of impact. Very good use is made of opportunities within the community, such as local swimming lessons and regular forest schools sessions for the older children. Parents are fully informed of their children's involvement in these activities, and have some opportunities to accompany them on outings. The staff develop strong links with parents from their initial visits. Baby room staff particularly spend as much time as required settling children to obtain the information needed to enable them to care for each baby according to their own routine. This information is updated by the key person, on a daily basis if necessary. All parents are provided with quality information about the provision relevant to their child's starting age, which is then updated as they move through the rooms. They have free access to their own child's records and are encouraged to add observations and comments about significant developments at home or elsewhere. Relationships are being developed with other settings that some children attend.

## **The quality and standards of the early years provision**

Children make good progress in their learning and development. They access an extensive range of age-appropriate activities which cover all areas of learning and follow their interests. They are encouraged to explore the environment and resources available, for example, young babies develop their fine coordination with treasure baskets while those older engage in role play to help their understanding of the world. Children benefit particularly from the extra provision that moving between rooms provides. They all engage in positive interaction with staff and each other, providing many opportunities to further their learning through discussion with open-ended questioning effectively making them think. All of the children have daily opportunities to experience creative and physical activities, for

example, the older children make streamers outside to encourage their interest in the effects of the wind. Planning is now child-centred and all staff conduct regular observations of the children, leading to entries in their assessment records. However, the frequency of the transfer of information varies so that not all of these records demonstrate the current level of children's abilities, the true extent of their progress or their next steps in all areas of learning.

Children's welfare is well-promoted. They develop good personal hygiene practises as most staff set a positive example and they are encouraged towards increasing independence. However, in the baby room routines are not as vigorous before meal times with regard to hand washing or the placing of their cups and as a result children could be at risk from cross infection. Excellent access to outdoor play and outings ensures children enjoy the benefit of an active lifestyle which is supported by a healthy, varied diet. Meals are freshly prepared, taking into account dietary needs, and provide a social occasion greatly enjoyed by the children. Drinks are readily available with staff vigilant in ensuring younger children access them frequently so that they are all well hydrated. Activities such as the forest school, taking part in regular fire drills, many of the boundaries in place and age-appropriate measures within the premises help children learn to keep themselves safe. Generally the children behave very well as they are totally engaged in their activities, which they have chosen for themselves. They increasingly understand what behaviour is expected of them, with staff handling incidents appropriately if they occur, taking individual age and circumstances into account. Children are encouraged to play together, for example, taking turns with resources or during games, so they learn to share and respect others thus developing habits and skills for future.

## Annex A: record of inspection judgements

### The key inspection judgements and what they mean

*Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality*

*Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong*

*Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound*

*Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough*

### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?</b>	2
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	2

### Leadership and management

<b>How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?</b>	2
How effective is the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement?	3
How well does the setting work in partnership with parents and others?	2
How well are children safeguarded?	2

### Quality and standards

<b>How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?</b>	2
<b>How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?</b>	2
How well are children helped to stay safe?	2
How well are children helped to be healthy?	2
How well are children helped to enjoy and achieve?	2
How well are children helped to make a positive contribution?	1
How well are children helped develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	2

Any complaints about the inspection or report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

## **Annex B: the Childcare Register**

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are: Met

The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are: Met