



Office for Standards  
in Education

## COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN 141794

DfES Number: 513336

### INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 26/01/2004  
Inspector Name Patricia Joan Latham

### SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Full Day Care  
Setting Name Acorn Day Nursery (Shenley Church End)  
Setting Address Shenley Road  
Shenley Church End  
Milton Keynes  
Buckinghamshire  
MK5 6AB

### REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name Acorn Childcare Ltd 2561855

### ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name Acorn Childcare Ltd  
Address Wesley House  
South Street  
Castlethorpe  
Milton Keynes  
MK19 7EL

## 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

Acorn day nursery has been registered since 1996 and is sited in the former village school at Shenley Church End on the outskirts of Milton Keynes city centre. The premises consist of four individual rooms, one of which is specifically for babies with separate play and sleep areas. There are toilet and changing facilities and a fully fitted kitchen, with all meals prepared by a full-time cook. There are secure outside play areas both at the front and back of the building. The office and staff facilities are housed in a separate building with other outside buildings having been converted to storage areas.

The nursery is open, Monday to Friday, 08:00 to 18:00 for 51 weeks of the year. It takes children aged from four months to five years and is able to take children in receipt of nursery funding. There are presently 44 children on roll of which there are 7 three-year-old and 12 four-year-old funded children. There are no children currently attending who have a statemented educational need or who speak English as an additional language.

There are two members of staff with appropriate qualifications who co-manage the nursery and 11 other staff members who have a range of relevant qualifications and experience. One of these is the designated Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO). There are additional staff employed as relief and extra support during the day; domestic staff are also employed.

### How good is the Day Care?

Acorn Day Nursery at Shenley provides good quality care for children. Staff have a good level of training and provide a warm and welcoming environment. The daily routine allows for children to make use of all areas which provides variety but can lead to time and space not being utilised well. The resources provided are of good quality and support children's play and development well.

Safety is given high priority and staff ensure all areas are made secure with good procedures followed on outings. Staff encourage children to develop good personal

hygiene and good practise minimises the risk from infection. Accidents are recorded but not always shared with parents. Children are provided with a variety of nutritious meals and snacks. There is a clear procedure for referring any concerns regarding children and staff have a good knowledge of child protection issues to ensure children's welfare is safeguarded at all times.

The activities that are provided are planned well and cover all areas of learning and development. Staff ensure all children are included and are able to provide good support for those less able. They promote a non-discriminating environment in which children learn to respect each other. Staff manage behaviour well and enable children to set their own boundaries.

Staff form a close working relationship with parents to ensure continuity of care. They pass information on on a daily basis and parents have opportunities to discuss children's progress. Parents are not always kept informed of all incidents involving their child or are able to contribute to their learning as news books for older children are not consistently available. Documentation is updated regularly and maintained securely. All necessary information is obtained and retained as required.

#### **What has improved since the last inspection?**

Not applicable.

#### **What is being done well?**

- Activities planned for children are interesting and stimulating for all ages. They are linked into a variety of themes and cover all areas of learning. There are craft and tactile activities for all ages and opportunities for role and imaginary play for more mobile children. Regular outings are undertaken and older children have the opportunity to go swimming and learn French.
- Good quality resources are readily available to all children to support their care and play. The baby room has equipment sufficient enough for numbers attending and a range of bright, tactile toys. Older children are able to choose their resources easily and have access to a wide range of toys to support their play and learning.
- The planned menu of meals is varied and meets the needs of all children's individual dietary requirements. A full time cook is employed and all meals are prepared on site. The weekly menu is rotated on a five weekly basis, displayed for parents to view and includes vegetarian options.
- Children with individual needs are supported well. Staff are sensitive to children settling in and babies own routines are followed as closely as possible. Children of differing cultures and abilities are accepted and respected and staff ensure all children are encouraged to take part in all activities.
- Staff maintain a safe environment and there are clear procedures to ensure children are kept safe at all times. The premises are kept secure and extra adult support used on outings. Children are encouraged to follow safe

practise in both indoor and outdoor play and resources are checked regularly to ensure they are safe for children to use.

#### **What needs to be improved?**

- the effective planning of the daily routine to enable staff to manage activities and group children more appropriately.
- the recording of all incidents and copies of all accidents to be shared with parents.
- the ability for parents to contribute consistently to their child's learning if they wish.

#### **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
12	Ensure all incidents of accidents or inappropriate behaviour are recorded and copies shared with parents.

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

### How effective is the nursery education?

The quality of the nursery education offered by Acorn day Nursery at Shenley is acceptable and of good quality. Children are making generally good progress towards the early learning goals. They are making generally good progress in their personal, social and emotional development and very good progress in all other areas.

Quality of teaching is generally good and staff have a good understanding of the Foundation Stage stepping stones reinforcing learning at every opportunity. They plan the curriculum to cover all areas of learning and are able to extend activities to meet the needs of all ages and abilities. Staff are able to offer good support to children with an identified educational need or who may have English as an additional language. They regularly assess children's progress and use this to inform individual learning plans. Although staff's management of behaviour is generally good the grouping of different ages together for some activities make it difficult for some children to relate well.

The leadership and management within the nursery is generally good. Staff follow a set daily routine and attend regular meetings to share information. They are able to update their knowledge through relevant training courses and there are procedures in place to assess activities and the overall programme offered to children. There is no procedure to evaluate this assessment. In consequence the daily routine can sometimes lead to time being wasted and activities not being managed well. This results in some children finding it hard to concentrate and develop skills.

Partnership with parents is generally good and key workers are always available to discuss children's progress. Regular meetings are held throughout the year and parents are asked to become involved with children's learning. Opportunities for involvement for some parents are missed, for example, news books are not always available to them.

### What is being done well?

- Staff take the opportunity to include learning into all activities planned for children. They encourage children to count, write and practise other necessary skills whilst doing craft, during outside play and in many other activities. This enables children to continually practise developing skills.
- Children are encouraged to develop independence and self confidence. Children become involved with clearing away activities, enjoy washing the paint pots or helping each other at the computer.
- Children are motivated to learn through practical, fun activities linked into interesting topics, such as 'All about Us'. Children play in a baby clinic, weigh and measure dolls, bath dolls in water play, make development books and

take a 'baby' home for the night to care for.

- The outside play area is used well. The children have use of a large area for running, using ride on toys and to take part in large team games. There is a wooden playhouse for imaginary play and grassed areas for environmental studies.
- Children's language development is encouraged by staff. They involve themselves in children's play asking relevant questions to extend children's vocabulary and understanding. Children are becoming confident communicators able to retell real and imaginary stories, assimilate and pass on information to each other.

#### **What needs to be improved?**

- The management of the daily routine, and some activities, to ensure that children are grouped appropriately and that areas of the nursery are staffed and used effectively to aid children's learning.
- The opportunities for all parents to contribute to children's learning on a consistent basis.

#### **What has improved since the last inspection?**

The nursery has made very good progress in addressing the key issues from the last inspection. Staff include learning intentions into planning and ensure there are activities offered for all areas of learning. A register of children with special educational needs has been established and children's assessments now derive from observations made. Assessments are linked into the Foundation Stage stepping stones to enable the progress of all children to be monitored.

## SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

### PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children are interested in all activities and confident to try new ones. They are developing personal independence, taking themselves to the toilet and choosing their own activities. They work and concentrate independently and in small groups but some find it difficult to concentrate in large group activities and can become disruptive.

### COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Very Good

Children are developing their language and increasing their vocabulary. They are given many opportunities to practise reading and writing and are able to recognise the sound and shape of many letters. Children are encouraged to write their own name and choose favourite story books to read to themselves.

### MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

There are many opportunities for children to learn and practise mathematical skills. They are becoming confident with numbers and recognising shapes, counting the number of boys in a group, taking part in number and shape treasure hunts. Children measure and record length and weight, measuring themselves and making a height chart and doing cooking activities.

### KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Very Good

Interesting and well planned themes and topics encourage children to learn about the world around them. They find out about the environment, visiting outside venues, growing things in the garden. Children learn about their own world and that of others taking part in activities linked to differing cultural events. They experiment and design, building a range of imaginary play equipment and making mobiles and models.

### PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children are developing good control and co-ordination of their body movements. There are planned activities to enable them to practise climbing and balancing skills, with musical movement and games to develop spatial awareness. Children are encouraged to use a range of toys and equipment safely and with increasing control.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Judgement: Very Good

There are many opportunities for children to express themselves creatively. They take part in music, song and dance and involve themselves in imaginary role play. Art activities include painting with leaves and twigs, printing with apples and doing large and small collages. Children are offered a variety of materials to explore, oatmeal dough, water and sand on a regular basis and cornflour and clay.

**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**

- Establish a procedure for monitoring and evaluating the daily programme of activities offered to ensure it is managed effectively.

*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.*