

Acorn Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number EY340856
Inspection date 10/01/2012
Inspector Sarah Measures

Setting address Burton Park, Polwell Lane, Burton Latimer, Kettering, NN15
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Type of setting Childcare - Non-Domestic

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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.

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Description of the setting

Acorn Day Nursery was registered in 2006. The nursery is one of eight provisions run by Acorn Childcare Ltd and operates from purpose built premises at Burton Park in Burton Latimer, Northamptonshire. Children come from a wide geographical area and attend for a variety of sessions. Children use two outdoor play areas, both of which are enclosed.

The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory part of the Childcare Register to provide a maximum of 65 places for children aged under eight years. Of these, 65 children may be in the early years age group and of these, not more than 24 may be under two years. The nursery is open each weekday from 7.30am to 6.15pm all year round, except bank holidays. Facilities include a kitchen, staff room, office, two meeting rooms, toilet and wash areas and interlinking children's accommodation rooms. There are currently 47 children on roll. The nursery supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those with English as an additional language. The nursery employs 11 staff to work with the children, nine of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications. The nursery is a member of the National Day Nursery Association and receives support from the local authority.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is satisfactory.

Overall, satisfactory policies and procedures underpin the organisation of the nursery and procedures for safeguarding the children are good. Children play and learn in a very positive, safe and well-planned environment. They choose from a very good range of fun and interesting activities. However, processes of observing and assessing children do not consistently support their progress towards early learning goals. Managers use several different methods to evaluate the quality of the provision, However, these systems do not identify all areas for development, in order to enable staff to confidently secure continuous improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- make sure assessments for all children are kept up to date and clearly demonstrate the progress of all children
- improve processes of self-evaluation, in order to support the planning and organisation of systems to meet children's individual needs
- make sure that the needs of all of the children are met at meal times
- improve the two-way sharing of information regarding children's needs and routines with parents of very young children.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Policies and procedures effectively safeguard the children. Robust procedures for vetting staff and for appraising staff ensure their suitability to work with the children. Staff show confidence in their understanding of the possible indicators of child abuse and they know how to refer any concerns they may have. Staff follow efficient procedures for dealing with complaints. Information regarding how to make a complaint that includes details of how to contact Ofsted as the regulator is shared with parents. This promotes a safe and transparent provision for children and parents. Staff maintain children's safety as they keep a clear record of the hours of children's attendance that includes when they leave the premises for any outings. Staff follow carefully considered procedures to make sure that children are safely collected by appropriately identified persons.

The premises is securely maintained and risk assessments across the nursery make sure that all areas are safe for children to use. Children choose from a very good variety of good quality, safe and developmentally appropriate toys and learning resources. Staff organise equipment and resources to create a very accessible and stimulating environment for all children. They display and include images of difference and diversity across the nursery, in order to encourage children to value those that are different from themselves. Secure policies and procedures promote an inclusive provision for children. Sound policies and procedures are in place to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Staff use different methods to support and communicate with any children and parents who have English as an additional language. The key worker is improved because there is now a 'buddy' key worker for each child. This provides improved opportunities to promote continuity of children's care and to help staff plan to meet the individual needs.

Staff work hard to establish close working relationships with parents. Various methods of involving parents and of communicating with parents help promote positive relationships. Information available shows that parents particularly appreciate the social events that staff plan to help them to feel involved. However, the two-way sharing of information regarding the needs and routines of the babies and very young children is not necessarily reliable. Information regarding children's routines is shared verbally with key workers as parents drop their children off and collect them. This makes it difficult for staff to share important information reliably with other staff if necessary, for example, if the key worker has to leave the setting for any reason. Suitable systems are in place for staff to share information regarding children's progress with any other setting children attend that also deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. This enables all involved in children's care and education to plan together to meet children's needs. Staff are keen to improve and speak positively about the training opportunities that they receive. They attend various training opportunities and then share their learning with the rest of the staff and at organised staff meetings. This helps to motivate and develop staff, which impacts positively upon the children. The self-evaluation completed by managers is positive and detailed, but does not appropriately

address key areas of the provision for children that can be improved.

The quality and standards of the early years provision and outcomes for children

Children are happy, settled and eager to participate in routines and activities. Some children sing as they play and older children talk happily amongst themselves as they enjoy activities. Children of all ages and stages of development choose freely from a very good variety of indoor and outdoor activities that promote all aspects of their development in fun and interesting ways. All children develop healthy habits as they play out of doors and use developmentally challenging equipment to promote their physical skills, strength and co-ordination. A good range of outdoor play opportunities are planned for all children to enjoy. For example, the older children have made a 'camp' outside the stems from their visit to the Forest School. This gives them opportunities to extend their learning and to build and construct using their own ideas and imagination. Babies and very young children benefit from a good variety of messy play opportunities. Young children make marks and patterns and explore using their senses as they play with cars in shaving foam and glitter. Toddlers paint and mix colours to see what happens. Babies and very young children play and learn in a constructively organised environment with good opportunities for them to explore and develop a desire to learn about how things work. Staff encourage them to explore and to investigate. They show a secure understanding of the importance of this for children to secure important skills for future learning. As children get older and progress through the nursery they count during routines and they have fun playing counting and matching games that help them to understand the meaning of number. Older children show that they enjoy books and stories as they choose books to look at themselves or in small groups or with staff. Children use a good range of information and communication technology to support their learning. For example, the older children use a lap top and an interactive whiteboard and programmable toys. Staff show a secure knowledge of the Early Years Foundation Stage and how children learn as they extend opportunities for children to make the most of activities and plan according to children's interests. For example, children recently showed an interest in a story about a lifecycle of a caterpillar. Therefore, staff planned different activities for children to enjoy across all of the areas of learning. Displays show how staff include children and encourage them to be proud of their work. Children are well occupied and stimulated and well behaved. Staff act as good role models, encouraging children to be well mannered and to behave with consideration.

While children enjoy their time at the nursery, the ability of all children to make good progress and to secure skills for their future learning is impacted by inconsistencies within systems of observing and assessing. Records for the younger children at the nursery clearly show their progress and plans for the next steps in their learning. Learning and development records also demonstrate staff's improved awareness of how children learn, as their achievements are evaluated and explained. However, this is not always the case for the older children and records are not always kept up to date. Staff state that constraints upon their time

make it difficult for them to keep on top of record keeping, which means there is potential to miss opportunities to plan for children's next steps. Overall, evidence is available, which shows that parents appreciate the healthy meals their children receive. Secure procedures make sure children's dietary needs are met within menu planning. However, staff do not monitor meal times sufficiently to make sure that all children enjoy and eat the meals. Children show appropriate independence and are encouraged to help to tidy away. Children pour their own drinks and serve their food at meal times. They are familiar with good hygiene routines and wash or are helped to wash their hands before eating. They develop a secure understanding of how to keep healthy through activities and routines. For example, they grow their own fruit and vegetables at the nursery and talk about healthy eating at meals times.

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

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	3
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	3

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	2
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding	2
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	3
The effectiveness of partnerships	3
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	2

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	3
The extent to which children feel safe	2
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	3
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	3

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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