



Little Acorns Private Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number EY330412
Inspection date 03 July 2006
Inspector Susan Janet Lee

Setting Address 279 Bolton Road, Atherton, MANCHESTER, M46 9HG

Telephone number 07725517798
E-mail Jakmoss@aol.com
Registered person Just Childcare Ltd
Type of inspection Integrated
Type of care Full day 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.

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

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Little Acorns Private Day Nursery reregistered under new ownership in 2006. It operates a converted, detached property in Atherton, Wigan. The setting is run by a limited company that also runs six other nurseries.

Children have access to eight playrooms, bathroom facilities and an outdoor play area. The nursery is open Monday to Friday from 07.50 until 18.00 all year with the exception of Bank Holidays and a Christmas break. The setting also provides an out

of school facility. The nursery is registered to provide care for a maximum of 65 children at any one time. There are currently 79 children on roll. Of these, 21 children receive funding for nursery education. The out of school provision currently has 14 children on roll. The nursery currently supports a number of children with additional needs.

The nursery employs 16 staff who work with the children, of these, 14 staff hold an appropriate early years qualification. Two staff who have a Level 2 qualification are currently working towards a Level 3 qualification. The facility liaises with Sure Start and is a member of the National Day Nurseries Association.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a well maintained environment. They stay healthy because staff exercise good hygiene practices to minimise the risk of cross infection. For example, they follow good standards of hygiene when changing nappies to help protect very young children and they use colour coded mops and cloths for different tasks. Children learn about personal care routines as they wash their hands at appropriate times of the day. They are familiar with these routines and older children know that their hands need to be clean before they eat their lunch. Toilets in the children's bathrooms are positioned side on so as to offer privacy from the corridors. However, the toilets do not have doors to help give children privacy when other children are using the bathroom.

Staff gather a wealth of information from parents about their children's dietary and cultural needs and take this information into account when planning meals and snacks. Staff work closely with parents to develop individual weaning plans for very young children. The menu is well balanced and includes up to four portions of fresh fruit and vegetables a day to aid children's growth and development. The children develop their sensory awareness as meals include foods from other countries and different tastes, textures and aromas. The children are able to freely quench their thirst independently as fresh drinking water readily accessible to them.

Very young children benefit from routines that are consistent to their experiences at home as staff follow children's individual meal and sleep routines. Babies are able to move around freely to practice their large physical skills, such as stretching, sitting, crawling, pulling themselves to the standing position and walking. All other children have lots of opportunities to enjoy and develop their physical skills as they play out on a daily basis. Younger children enjoy playing in the wooden play house, riding bikes, pushing trucks, playing with balls and using the slide. Children in receipt of nursery education enjoy running, jumping, sliding, balancing on stepping stones and walking along a wobbly log trail, all of which contributes to their good health and physical development. They are able to negotiate pathways well and they show respect for other children's personal space. They develop an understanding of healthy practices. For example, they know they need to more to drink on hot days.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a warm, welcoming environment. Lots of children's art work, posters and information for parents is displayed. The setting provides a good selection of furniture and equipment to allow all children to play, rest and eat in comfort. A wide range of resources are available to help the children progress in all areas of their development. Staff check equipment, furniture and toys on a regular basis to minimise risks to children. All items are safe, clean, good quality and of suitable design for their purpose.

Very detailed risk assessments are in place. Staff have a good awareness of safety and all reasonable steps have been taken to ensure that the environment in which children are cared for is safe and secure. The children practice evacuation procedures with staff on a regular basis, helping them to develop an awareness of what to do in the event of an emergency, such as a fire. Staff are vigilant in supervising children when they go down the stairs to play outdoors, they also protect the children from danger. For example, children do not play out when the sun is at its hottest. Children learn about keeping themselves safe through daily routines and play activities. For example, staff use age appropriate explanation and distraction techniques to guide the younger children and older children recently participated in a 'road safety' theme.

All appropriate documentation is in place and staff have a good understanding of child protection matters and procedures, helping to safeguard children's welfare.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Some staff have recently attended training in relation to the Birth to three matters framework and they have a growing awareness of the aspects of the framework. They use their understanding well to provide a wide range of activities for children under three years of age. Staff observe children at play and provide activities to meet children's individual needs and help to move them onto their next stage of development. The management team are currently working with staff to develop and introduce a new formal system for planning and assessment.

The welcoming environment, small group rooms and effective 'key worker' system allows the staff and children to get to know each other well. Staff share warm relationships with the children, who are happy and settled in their care. They dedicate time playing and talking to the children and support them well in their play and learning. Babies begin to develop early communication skills as staff nurture their attempts to communicate. They listen and respond to babies babbles and respond in gentle tones to help reinforce early speech patterns.

Very young children have access to a good range of resources and low level wall displays that are colourful, shiny, tactile and that make sounds, helping to develop their sensory skills. The children make connections as they play. For example, a child

sits with a member of staff, he presses buttons on an interactive toy and waits to see what happen will happen next. The toy makes a noise, so the child presses the button again and waits excitedly for the sound to be repeated. A group of children enjoy being creative as they draw pictures which are admired by the staff. The children enjoy being together as they play outside. They join in singing songs with the staff and they giggle as they join in with the actions to the songs.

Children attending the out of school provision clearly enjoy their time at the setting. They share good relationships with staff who chat to them about their day as they have a snack after returning from school. The children talk about their favourite activities and comment that they enjoy spending time with their friends.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have secure knowledge of the Foundation Stage and they plan a range of stimulating activities to help children make good progress towards the early learning goals. Effective systems are in place in relation to planning and assessment. Staff confidently use differentiation to meet children's individual needs when planning play activities. They have a clear awareness of the learning intentions of focused activities and ask open ended questions and introduce new concepts as they work with the children. Staff are adept in knowing when to support the children and when to stand back to allow them to explore and investigate freely. Children have lots of opportunities to revisit activities to consolidate their learning.

The children show good skills in selecting and carrying out activities and they display high levels of involvement in their chosen activities. They develop a good awareness of boundaries, older children line up and wait in turn to use the slide. The children have good levels of independence in self help skills, such as using the bathroom, putting aprons on and helping to set the tables for lunch.

Children use language well to express their feelings, describe what they are doing and to recall past experiences. They develop good descriptive skills, a group of children explore a feather and use words, such as soft, fluffy and silky to describe the texture. Children recognise their own name as they self register on arrival. They begin to form recognisable letters as staff encourage them to write their names on their pictures and copy phrases for displays. The children learn that we write for a purpose as they have access to mark making tools in a variety of activities and role play situations.

Children learn about mathematical concepts, such as number, shape and measure through daily routines and play activities. They are confident to use number in a variety of situations. For example, a child uses the mouse to count five rabbits on the computer and when a group of children initiate a game of hide and seek, the child who is 'on' counts to ten whilst the other children hide. However, there are limited opportunities for children to develop their problem solving skills to calculate. The children use positional language well in their play. They are able to name and match shapes. Older children learn about more complex shapes, such as hexagons and diamonds.

The children have many opportunities to become aware of the world in which they live when they participate in activities, such as experiments to colour flowers and grow water cress from seeds. They develop a sense of place as they look at other countries and cultures and use maps. The children have access to a computer and some other interactive resources. They know how to operate the equipment and enjoy completing simple programmes. However, there are few programmable resources available.

Children are able to express their own thoughts and ideas creatively in many ways as they engage in drawing, painting, collage, construction and imaginative play. They have lots of opportunities to re-enact their own experiences and develop their understanding of the world as they have access to a good range of imaginative play resources and situations.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Staff gather lots of information from parents to enable them to be in a position to best meet children's individual needs; they do this well and with sensitivity. Staff promote positive attitudes through discussion with children during play. The setting provides a good range of play materials that reflect diversity, helping children to learn about the wider world. The children celebrate their own and other cultures, helping them to value and appreciate each other's similarities and differences. The Staff work closely in partnership with parents and other professionals to meet children's additional needs.

Staff are consistent in their approach to managing behaviour. They encourage positive behaviour as they act as good role models. They encourage the children to use 'please' and 'thank you' and to share and take turns. As a result, children are polite, behave well and develop an understanding of taking turns and sharing. Staff praise children's efforts and achievements helping to give children a sense of pride and develop their confidence and self-esteem. Children develop a good sense of belonging. They develop an awareness of care and concern as they participate in themes that enable them to explore and celebrate love and kindness. Staff treat the children with concern, patience and respect. For example, a child sits on his own at lunch time, staff encourage him to sit with his friends then he won't be on his own. Staff encourage children to take responsibility as they encourage them to help tidy up and help to set tables for lunch. The setting fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Staff build good working relationships with parents, who are very happy with the service provided, levels of care and activities afforded. Effective systems are in place to keep parents informed about the setting and their children's activities. Good settling in procedures and partnership with parents ensures children feel secure. Staff develop links between home and nursery, the children take 'Bruno bear' and his diary home, parents and children write in the diary and sometimes take photographs to record what Bruno has done at the weekend; this is then shown and discussed at circle time. The partnership with parents of children in receipt of nursery education is

satisfactory. Parents are provided with a good source of information regarding the Foundation Stage. Effective systems are in place to gather information from parents about their children's starting points. The children's developmental records are freely accessible to parents at any time. Staff recently held a parent's evening and plan more of these in the near future. Most parents feel involved in their children's learning. The management team are fully aware of the areas for development in relation to partnership with parents of children in receipt of nursery education and plans are underway to make further improvements.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The new owners have introduced an effective vetting procedure that helps to protect children. The management team are committed to the further development of care and education for all children. Staff have a high regard for children's well-being as they attend training on a regular basis to further develop their childcare practice. Four staff have valid first aid certificates ensuring they have up to date knowledge of what to do in the event of an accident or minor injury.

A good induction procedure enables staff to have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Staff work well together as a team and they organise space, time and resources well to effectively meet children's needs. The record of children's attendance shows that staff to child ratios are maintained to promote children's care.

All appropriate policies and procedures are in place and they work in practice to promote children's health, safety, enjoyment, achievement and ability to make a positive contribution. Most required documentation is in place. However, there is no system in place to record existing injuries. Staff maintain children's individual records to ensure confidentiality.

The leadership and management of nursery education is good.

The new management team support the staff well in the delivery of nursery education. Very detailed evaluation forms are in place and the management team have a clear awareness of the strengths and areas for development. Staff meet regularly to discuss and monitor the delivery of nursery education. The management team value staff's involvement, they are able to contribute their ideas and make choices.

Overall the provision meets the needs of the range of children then who attend.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

There are no complaints to report.

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

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

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):

- take steps to further enhance children's privacy when they are using the bathroom
- develop a system to record existing injuries.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- develop teaching practices to encourage children to use problem solving skills to calculate and further develop children's interest in information and communication technology by extending the range of programmable toys
- continue to develop the partnership with parents of children in receipt of nursery education.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk