



Acorns

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY341932
Inspection date	05 February 2007
Inspector	Linda Pressley
Setting Address	36 Alphington Road, EXETER, EX2 8HN
Telephone number	01392 272621
E-mail	
Registered person	SPL Education Ltd T/A St Peter's School
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?

Acorns Day Nursery is situated on the ground floor of a large house, close to the centre of Exeter. It opened in 1996, and re-registered under the ownership of SPL Education Limited in 2006. There are four playrooms, a sleep room, kitchen, toilets, office and staff facilities, as well as two enclosed outdoor play areas. The nursery is registered to care for up to 37 children, aged from birth to five years. There are currently 69 children on roll and of these 16 are funded three- and four-year-olds. There are 14 staff members, 13 of whom have appropriate child care qualifications. The nursery is open from 08:00 to 18:00 on weekdays, throughout the year.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The health and well being of the children attending the setting is promoted well by the staff. Efficient cleaning routines ensure children are protected from infection. The toys used by the children are cleaned regularly. Each child has individual fresh bedding for sleep times, which is laundered weekly. Nappy changing routines are hygienic and minimise cross infection. At each nappy change the staff use disposable gloves and aprons and the changing mat is wiped down after use. The youngest children are further protected from infection through a no shoe policy in the baby room ensuring a hygienic environment for crawling babies playing on the floor. Older children are learning about hygiene routines through washing their hands before snack, at lunchtimes and after using the toilet. They use liquid soap and paper towels when washing their hands ensuring cross infection is kept low. Prior written permission is sought to administer any medicines and parents are informed of the amounts given whilst the children are in the care of the nursery. Accidents and incidents are recorded on sheets exclusive to each child and filed in the children's individual folders ensuring all information is kept confidential and children are protected.

The food consumed by the children is of a high quality. All food is cooked daily from fresh ingredients on the premises. The cook follows a four week menu system with an extensive range of different meals which are not replicated during the four week period. The separate baby menu is prepared using no added sugar or salt. Children eat highly nutritional food, including fresh meat, fish, vegetables and fruit. Children's individual dietary needs are well catered for, regarding both allergies and child preference. The children enjoy healthy snacks of fruit, vegetables, bread sticks, milk or water as part of the daily routine. The older children's health and wellbeing is maintained through continual, independent access to fresh drinking water from a water cooler. Babies are given regular drinks of water as part of the daily routine to ensure good levels of hydration are maintained. Good use is made of the outdoor area to ensure all children attending the provision have access to fresh air and physical exercise on a daily basis.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

The children are safe and well cared for. Outdoor areas are well maintained and secure. The main entrance is locked and access is gained through an intercom system ensuring no child can leave unnoticed and strangers cannot enter unobserved. The safety of children's play environment is monitored through a sound system of risk assessment. Any risks identified are minimised through appropriate action. There are safety gates to all baby rooms, electrical sockets are covered and there are guards on the radiators. Sleeping babies in the cot room are kept safe through the use of baby monitors connected to the main baby room and regular visual checks.

The children play in a warm, comfortable environment the rooms are light and airy and have low windows enabling them to see outside. The play areas are organised so that the children

can be active, have space to play and learn and space to sit and to relax. The majority of children access a stimulating, child friendly play and learning environments with easily accessed toys, but the provision for the older toddling babies is only satisfactory. This area of the setting has a sufficient range of toys so that children experience a variety of play opportunities, but they are few in number.

The setting has an effective child protection policy to ensure children are protected from harm. Staff are aware of the signs and symptoms of abuse and the reporting procedure if abuse is suspected. The provision is aware for the need for confidentiality in all matters concerning staff and children and all personal details are stored securely.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The children enjoy their time at the setting and separate from parents with ease and confidence. The children benefit from a stimulating environment and participate in a wide range of activities. The progression of the under threes is monitored through the use of the Birth to Three Matters guidance. Each child has a file where achievements and participation in activities are recorded through the use of digital photography and examples of children's work. Even the youngest children engage in messy, sensory play, for example babies experiment with bubble painting, patting and bursting the bubbles and exploring the feel of the paint. Babies are gaining a sense of self through the low level mirrors around the baby room and meaningful interaction with the staff and other children. Staff sit on the floor with the youngest babies and toddlers stimulating the children's interest in their surroundings, shaking and rattling musical toys, rolling balls back and forth to them and responding positively to the children's early attempts to communicate. Toddlers enjoy being outside, riding bikes, pushing wheeled toys, climbing and sliding. The rising threes engage enthusiastically in singing games, taking turns to be speckled frogs jumping into a pond, sustaining interest and asking for the activity to be repeated. They sit and listen to familiar stories with enjoyment and attention joining in with the repetitive refrains. Children across the setting join music sessions every two weeks with a music specialist who visits. Children sit in a large circle participating keenly in the action rhymes and songs, moving rhythmically to the singing. Children are developing self esteem, confidence and a sense of belonging through songs that invite them to make individual contributions, for example the hello song where children sing and clap hello to each other.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The children benefit positively from the staff's knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum. The staff plan activities across all areas of learning from literacy and maths to creative and physical play. The children demonstrate their understanding of the world around them through constructing complex miniature worlds, for example constructing a farm from bricks and fences to house the farm animals. The children experience a mix of adult directed activity and child initiated play. On occasions the adult led activity is a little too structured reducing the children's opportunity to demonstrate fully what they know and understand. The children are making good progress and are successful learners. They initiate their own play ideas and can sustain long periods of interest in self chosen activity,

for example children create a pond for some fish by collecting water from the water cooler and making weed from cellophane.

The children are making good progress which is tracked by the staff through dated, focussed observation recorded in relation to the stepping stones in the Foundation Stage curriculum. The staff generate individual targets for each child related to the areas of learning to ensure all children are sufficiently challenged, for example in physical development children are set targets to balance and move in different ways and in communication literacy and language to express wants verbally and to follow instructions. The children are competent learners. They are able to share resources and toys, build positive relationships with their peers and invite others into their imaginary play, for example a child asks others to come into a tent to shelter because it is raining in the nursery. The children are developing physical skills through daily physical activity negotiating appropriate pathways when playing walking, running and jumping games. The children are learning number order in an active way when playing what's the time Mr Wolf? They listen to stories with good attention and contribute by predicting what will happen next. They participate individually in whole group counting activities, learning the order of the numbers and to count one by one pointing to each object. The children create animals from clay, learning to mould and manipulate the clay, to make patterns using one handed tools and to create two D and three D representations of familiar animals.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The children are well behaved and are learning how to make positive contributions to the community of the nursery. They are learning to value the needs of others and to accept all their peers as equals. The staff promote equal opportunity throughout the setting by attending to individual need enabling all children to access the curriculum that is offered. The setting has a variety of resources that promote positive images of gender, race, ethnicity and culture. A poster greeting children in many different languages written in many different scripts welcomes the children at the entrance to the nursery. Books and resources that reflect a multicultural society are used regularly by the children. Small world figures representing different races, genders and occupations are used by the children when creating miniature play worlds. Puppets that depict many different races are used in child initiated play and in whole group circle times. The children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. The nursery is able to cater for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The staff have relevant training and the structure and content of the special needs policy supports the care and inclusion of all children.

The children are able to consider the needs of other children in the group and their place in the group when waiting their turn to have snack, to ride on a bike or to collect their coat to go outside. The children are happy and settled and respond well to the clearly defined routines and behavioural boundaries. Staff use praise effectively to confirm achievement and to validate expected behaviour. The children are learning to build good relationships with their peers through the positive relationships modelled by the adults caring for them. Staff liaise with parents effectively to agree consistent behaviour management strategies from home to nursery and to set age appropriate expectations and boundaries in relation to the children's behaviour.

Parents are happy with the provision in particular with the high nutritional quality of food offered to the children. Parents of the youngest children are informed about their child's day through the use of a daily diary where staff record the number of nappy changes, amount of food consumed, general wellbeing of the child and the play activities the child has participated in.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents are informed about the Foundation Stage curriculum in the nursery information booklet given to each parent when the child starts at the nursery. A detailed file is kept on each child's progress in relation to the stepping stones and the early learning goals. This file can be accessed by parents and carers when dropping off or collecting children and it can also be taken home ensuring parents and carers are fully informed about their child's progress. The nursery sends out monthly news letters which outline the themes and topics that will be focussed on in the coming month, informing parents about what their child will be doing. Weekly planning relating to the Foundation Stage is displayed on the wall of the school room enabling parents to access information about what their child will be doing on a daily basis.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides. The number of staff required under the National Standards is met at all times and there are sound contingency plans to maintain ratios due to sudden staff absence. The majority of staff are suitably qualified, holding either a level two or three qualification in childcare. The manager ensures staff are informed about the National Day Care Standards through monthly staff meetings where the requirements of the standards are outlined and possible improvements discussed. The children are cared for in age specific groups ensuring that all children experience developmentally appropriate play, activity and care. Legally required documentation is in place and is used to support the care of the children on most occasions. The registers of attendance are not filled in accurately at all times. This puts the children at risk in the event of an emergency. All members of staff are checked through the Criminal Records Bureau to ensure they are suitable to work with young children ensuring children attending the setting are protected from harm.

Leadership and management are good. The manager is ensuring that the nursery education delivered by the setting is of a good standard. He monitors the work of his staff and regularly works alongside them in the school room. The setting is currently employing a qualified teacher in an advisory capacity to monitor teaching, planning and assessment of the Foundation Stage curriculum delivered to the children. The manager liaises with the advisory teacher to identify and consolidate good practice and to target areas where improvements can be made. The increased knowledge and confidence gained by the staff through working with the advisory teacher is impacting positively on the quality of the teaching and learning experienced by the children.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since registration 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 Ofsted.

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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 registers are filled in accurately to safeguard children in the event of an emergency
- improve variety of toys and equipment available to stimulate toddling babies

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):

- ensure that adult directed activities provide an appropriate challenge for children in order to progress their learning.

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