

Little Acorns Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	509195
Inspection date	16 October 2007
Inspector	Justine Ellaway
Setting Address	10 Thornhill Road, Off Albany Road, Derby, Derbyshire, DE22 3LX
Telephone number	01332 346088
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Registered person	Associated Nurseries 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 outstanding. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are outstanding.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Little Acorns Day Nursery is one of three nurseries run by Associated Nurseries Limited. It opened in 1998 and operates from a large converted Victorian house in Derby. A maximum of 36 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 07.30 to 18.30. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 49 children aged from birth to under five years on roll. Of these, eight children receive funding for early education. Children come from the local area.

The nursery employs 13 members of staff. Of these, 12 hold appropriate early years qualifications.

The nursery is a member of the National Day Nurseries Association and the Pre-School Learning Alliance. The nursery has links with the Local Authority Early Years team and has achieved the 'Quality Counts' accreditation.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children's good health is exceptionally well promoted in the setting as there are exemplary hygiene procedures. The immaculately clean and tidy environment is regularly cleaned throughout the day, so that children can play safely on the floor. A detailed cleaning rota is displayed in each room for staff reference. Staff wear different shoes outdoors to protect the carpets. Staff who prepare food have an updated food hygiene certificate. There is excellent promotion of hygiene procedures by staff to develop children's understanding. Children are very clear why they are washing their hands. They explain that that if you are going to eat lunch you need to wash your hands in case there are any germs.

The risk of infection is effectively minimised and the good health of children maintained. Nappy changing procedures fully minimise the risk of cross-infection. Information on toileting and the transition from nappies to potty training is displayed as a guide for all staff. A clear and detailed timetable of nappy changing is displayed. This innovative system has been devised by the setting and is based on children's attendance times, to ensure that every child is changed frequently. Careful monitoring of the cots and bedding ensures that this is changed after each child has slept. Babies and younger children use individual flannels which are washed after use.

Children receive a high level of care when they have an accident or become ill to maintain their good health. A high number of staff have a first aid qualification. The staff rota ensures that there is at least two first aid qualified staff members on the premises at all times. An excellent monitoring process is in place to review and minimise accidents within the setting. The setting has successfully reduced the number of accidents and is proud of the accomplishment that in one month recently there were no accidents. All staff are very clear of the procedures for administering medication. There is an organised folder in each room where each child has their own medicine sheet. This is put into a daily folder so that staff can easily obtain the information.

Children enjoy a range of stimulating and interesting activities that help them to learn about healthy eating and living. For an activity looking at different and unusual fruits the children made a shopping list. They then purchased the fruit from the local supermarket. The children were involved in preparing them before they tasted them. As well as learning about a healthy lifestyle, children were able to try different foods that they may not have eaten before.

Children are extremely well nourished and their health and dietary needs are consistently met. A healthy range of meals and snacks are provided which the cooks prepares from fresh ingredients. Alternatives are provided for children with dietary needs and those who do not want the planned meal. This ensures children are adequately nourished. Careful consideration is given to the nutritional balance of the meals across the day, including the salt and sugar content and the amount of fruit and vegetables. One of the management team members has been on a nutrition course and has produced a detailed, informative and useful food fact sheet that is given to parents.

Snack and mealtimes offer excellent opportunities for children to develop their social skills. This is expertly promoted by staff in a calm and friendly way. They sit with the children throughout the whole of the meal and talk to them about things that interest them and what they are eating. They encourage good manners and support children to successfully use cutlery.

Younger children sleep and eat according to their needs. Clear and detailed care plans are drawn up in consultation with parents and displayed for staff to reference. Each child has their own wallet where staff record their sleep during the day.

There is regular discussion and activities looking at the effects of exercise on the body, why we exercise and what this does for us. Children clearly remember talking about this at the nursery and a three year old gets a skipping rope and says they need it to do some exercise. Children grow their own vegetables in the nursery garden. They also enjoy visits from significant members of the community, such as a dental hygienist who talks to the children about brushing your teeth.

Children enjoy varied, interesting and stimulating opportunities to be active and engage in physical exercise both indoors and outdoors. This fully and effectively promotes the development of their physical skills. Children in the one to two age group engage in a very well planned music and movement session. Staff interact very well with the children who try to copy their movements. They really enjoy stamping their feet as they walk and bouncing up and down using their knees. Staff expertly support babies and younger children to achieve their next stage of development. For example, developing their balance as they walk or sitting unsupported. This is provided for both indoors and outdoors. Staff set up a mat with toys outside for children to play on and encourage children to reach and stretch for certain toys.

Children who are funded to receive nursery education make rapid progress towards, and beyond, the early learning goals for physical development. High importance is placed on children's physical development and they enjoy daily outdoor sessions, as well as gym and physical education sessions twice a week. Varied and interesting activities are planned during sessions, for example, obstacle courses and moving at different speeds. Children love playing outdoors and staff are keen to accommodate this and bring activities outdoors for them.

Children move with careful control and co-ordination. A three year old accurately copies the movements of a ladybird he sees in the garden as it is trying to fly. He jumps to place his feet wide, bends his legs and puts his arms out. Children demonstrate a considerable awareness of their own space and others. For example, when entering the almost full playhouse a three year old negotiates a space as they enter and then moves a skipping rope out of the way so there is more room. This is done without disturbing the children that are already playing inside. Children show excellent control of their small muscle skills, as they use cutlery at lunchtime to eat their meal. They successfully use tools such as scissors and a hole punch independently during a designing and making task.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children are cared for in an extremely bright, welcoming and attractive environment which helps them to feel secure and comfortable. There are photographs of the children at play, attractively displayed in the baby room, under the different aspects of the 'Birth to three matters' framework. This helps children to feel a sense of belonging and parents to understand in a real way what the framework includes. The craft room has children's work attractively displayed and as a result this helps children to feel valued. A useful and attractive notice board in the reception area displays informative information about the setting for parents.

Children use an extremely good variety of toys and equipment which is of a high quality. Excellent consideration is given to the range in each room so that children have a variety of

things to stimulate them, such as treasure baskets of different materials in the baby room. Children enjoy the challenge and stimulation provided by the toys that are provided. For example, children in the pre-school room enthusiastically play with a complex construction set that keeps them occupied for long periods of time. Equipment is stored safely in a very organised way with clear labelling on the front of boxes on shelves. Children can ask for any toys and equipment that are not out at a particular time and often go and choose what they want. Staff carefully rotate the equipment according to planning and children's needs and requests. There is a superior range of child sized furniture in each of the rooms. Considerable attention is given to the range of toys and resources that children play with outdoors. They enjoy toys such as the different size climbing frames, balls, hoops, paintbrushes and water and a playhouse as well as taking out any toys from indoors that they want to.

Children's safety and security is fully promoted as there are excellent systems in place. As a result children are kept extremely safe and secure. For example, the use of closed circuit television monitors visitors to the door, along with a buzzer system. There is an extensive range of written policies and procedures in place including a comprehensive risk assessment. This is updated frequently by the setting, as well as being checked on a yearly basis by external professionals. Children regularly practise the emergency evacuation procedures and are developing an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves safe. They are very clear on what the safety rules are within the nursery and a child explains that you must not run in case you fall over and hurt yourself. A three year old is looking at a book with a member of staff and explains that a child is holding a pair of scissors the wrong way, and that the child might drop them and hurt their foot. The children enjoy visits from significant people in the community, such as police officers, to talk to them about safety.

Children are very well protected from possible abuse or neglect. All staff clearly understand their role in child protection and are able to put appropriate procedures into practice when necessary. The setting monitors bumps and bruises so they can easily identify any patterns of injuries. Child protection is covered in the induction training for staff and on an ongoing basis.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children are extremely well settled, happy and fully enjoy their time at the nursery. They separate well from their carers and immediately join in play. All children are very comfortable with the staff and have a very good relationship with them.

Children flourish in the stimulating environment and make excellent progress in their learning and development. A varied, interesting and challenging range of play opportunities and activities are provided for all children. All staff have attended training on learning styles and activities are tailored specifically to how each individual child learns, their interests and to fully extend and develop their learning. The 'Birth to three matters' framework is skilfully used to provide a broad and balanced variety of activities and play opportunities for younger children. The quality of younger children's learning experiences are enriched by staff's detailed knowledge of the children. Detailed, informative and easy to read development records are in place for each child. They are regularly updated and successfully used to inform the planning of future activities. As a result all children's needs are met and a high level of challenge is provided to fully promote children's learning and development.

Excellent support and high quality interaction fully promotes children's enjoyment and achievement. Staff across the nursery consistently engage with and stimulate children throughout

the day. When reading a story to younger children a staff member is animated and also uses toy animals to capture the children's interest. The children are engrossed and make the noises of the animals and join in with the story. Staff are expert at asking questions in a way that encourages children to think and problem solving, without it interrupting the flow of their play.

Children demonstrate high levels of independence and confidence, which is expertly promoted by staff. A two year old finishes a painting and puts it into the drying rack independently. Children of all ages are very confident and comfortable in the environment and in choosing what they play with. Children use their imagination exceptionally well. A child is playing with some construction blocks and pretends to make breakfast. Different coloured blocks are used for the different elements of the breakfast and complex language is used to describe what has been made.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Children make rapid progress towards the early learning goals.

Staff knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage is excellent. The planning is meticulous and based on meeting the needs of each individual child within the setting. Innovative systems for observing and recording children's progress ensure that children's learning and development is fully promoted. As a result children's accomplishments are over and above what is expected of them for their age.

The superb methods of teaching employed by staff help children to learn in an inspiring and challenging way. Children are actively encouraged to problem solve and extend and initiate their own play. For example, when children decide that they want to make props for their puppet show, they independently access a varied range of resources with full support from staff. A child is making a model using string and says 'Look where its tangled'. A staff member asks 'What would happen if it wasn't there?' The child thinks about it and says 'It would fall down'. Staff place consistently high expectations on the children to ensure that their learning and development is fully promoted. Careful consideration is given to the range and presentation of resources to stimulate children's interest.

Children are extremely confident and independent. They display high levels of interest as they become engrossed in different activities and concentrate as they persevere with tasks and accomplish complex pieces of work. Children are developing very good relationships with staff and other children. A child solves a problem and another child spontaneously praises them. Children carefully adhere to the rules of the nursery and are clear what these are, for example, no running.

Children are extremely confident and fluent speakers. They make lots of relevant comments and verbalise their thoughts whilst they are playing. A child comments during play that they need to put the curtain across the puppet show so that they don't see the puppets. Children are often animated and use lots of interesting and imaginative language during play. Children confidently recognise the first letter of their own name and many other letters in the alphabet. A child notices that a model is in the shape of the letter 'r'. Children love books and stories and often become engrossed in books that they look at by themselves. Children listen with enthusiasm as a member of staff reads a story to them, and look at the pictures and make relevant observations about what might happen next. Children make very good attempts at writing their own name at a very early age, with recognisable letters.

Children frequently use maths language during their everyday play. They demonstrate a very good understanding of size language. A child comments to a staff member 'My plate is bigger than yours'. A varied and interesting range of activities are provided to develop children's knowledge in all areas, for example, making two and three dimensional shapes for the Christmas tree. Children engage in a practical number and problem solving activity each day to reinforce their learning.

Children show high levels of curiosity in how things work and why things happen. For example, children are fascinated by a ladybird that lands near the playhouse. They watch as it flies closer to the nursery garden. A staff member comes over and they talk about what it is doing and whether it might be looking for food. Children demonstrate high levels of imagination and concentration when designing and making. They have independent access to a very good range of tools and resources and continually modify and adapt their designs until they are satisfied with the result. Children grow different plants and vegetables in the nursery garden, which also contains sensory items to stimulate children's senses as they smell and feel the different plants. Children are expert at problem solving. A child suggests that a cloth is held on to the playhouse roof with cones that are in the nursery garden. Excellent linking of the use of information communication technology to different topics, presents children with excellent ways of developing their understanding. For example, the children send a postcard to a sister nursery and then telephone the nursery to check that it has been received.

Children are developing a very good understanding of colour, texture, shape and form in two and three dimensions. They know a range of colours and do lots of free painting, drawing, designing and making. They frequently engage in singing and music, looking at different techniques with instruments. Children are animated when engaging in pretend play and use lots of imaginative and descriptive language.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children are eager to attend the setting, which puts the child at the heart of everything it does. All children are welcomed and play a full part in the nursery life. Although there is a routine for each day, this is extremely flexible and is directed by what the children want to do. For example, children frequently revisit art or creative work during the day until they are satisfied it is finished. A wealth of information is gathered on each child, both at the time of placement and on an ongoing basis. As a result children's individual needs are met extremely well.

Children are greeted in a warm and friendly manner by all adults in the nursery. They display high levels of confidence in talking to staff and asking for things, such as, additional resources. Babies enjoy secure relationships with staff which means that they are very comfortable and settled.

Children's behaviour is exemplary. Children are thoughtful, friendly and respectful. Staff are excellent role models and are immensely skilful at posing questions in a calm and friendly manner, so that children think about how they can resolve an issue and consider the feelings of others. Two children want the same coloured bricks to make a model. A staff member carefully explains that they need to share, and asks them how many they need and how many they think it is fair the other child has. A compromise is quickly reached by the children and they happily continue playing. Children's self-esteem is successfully promoted by staff who provide consistent praise and encouragement. A staff member claps enthusiastically when a younger child manages

to press the correct button on a toy. The child laughs and repeats the action again. Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered.

Children have very good opportunities to learn about the local community and the wider world through an interesting range of activities. Children regularly visit a local residential home for older people to participate in meaningful activities, such as, taking a basket at harvest time. When looking at Diwali, a member of the community came in to talk to the children about her experiences and to share some of the customs of the event. Other visitors have included the hearing dogs for the deaf.

Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive a high level of support and have their needs effectively met whilst at the setting. The nursery is strongly committed to inclusion and as with every child that attends, determines what the needs are at the time of placement. A proactive approach is taken to identifying and securing support for the child and for staff if required.

The partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. Parents speak highly of the level of care and education within the nursery and feel fully informed of all aspects. There are superb systems in place to promote this. Parents receive a detailed and relevant daily feedback sheet and staff talk to them when they drop off and collect their child. Detailed development plans are frequently shared with parents and they are invited to attend regular parents meetings where they are informed of their child's progress and the next steps that staff will be working on. Parents are invited to fully express their views and contribute to children's development records at these meetings. Children are able to continue their learning at home through effective systems such as borrowing books. There is a range of useful and relevant information displayed for parents in the reception area, including information that they can use at home such as how to manage behaviour. Good consideration is given to the communication needs of parents and additional resources are produced or sought if required.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

Children receive a high level of support whilst at the nursery which has a significantly positive effect on their care, learning and play. There is a high number of staff to children, meaning that children consistently get one to one support during the day. The established, experienced and skilled staff team provide a consistent presence within the age group they work to ensure children feel comfortable. There is excellent deployment of staff throughout the day and effective communication between them ensures they work collectively during activities to fully support the children.

The organisation of the nursery makes a significant and positive contribution to children's good health, safety, enjoyment and achievement and ability to take an active part in the setting. Excellent organisation of the space provides a variety of rooms used by the children throughout the day for different purposes. Staff meticulously plan and organise resources. For example, staff in the baby room get the resources ready for the whole day early in the morning, so that children do not wait during transition periods.

Robust recruitment and vetting procedures ensure that children are cared for by adults who are vetted, fully promoting their safety. High importance is placed on every aspect of the process to ensure that suitable candidates are appointed. For example, when a post becomes vacant, a detailed audit is undertaken of the needs of the nursery. The same level of detail is

applied at each stage of the process. A range of appropriate checks are undertaken at the same time. An extensive induction and probationary period then ensures that newly appointed staff receive appropriate information, support and guidance during the first few months of employment.

The setting demonstrates a very high level of commitment to improvement. Comprehensive support and supervision is provided regularly for all staff. All staff are encouraged to contribute at these meetings. Interesting, relevant and useful training is accessed on a regular basis. Action plans are continually reviewed and updated, based on internal monitoring, links with various external agencies through representation on meetings and the management team constantly researching and updating themselves on any changes.

Exceptional attention to detail is given to every decision made within the nursery. The management team seek professional advice and guidance and look at all options. For example, when considering the flooring for the outdoor play area, an audit was undertaken of what it would be used for and information was sought on the different surfaces available and the risks involved with each, before the final decision was made.

An extensive range of detailed and professional policies and procedures effectively work in practice to promote children's health, safety, enjoyment, achievement and ability to make a positive contribution. They are regularly reviewed and updated and checked by external professionals to ensure all relevant information is included. All staff are fully aware of practices within the nursery.

The leadership and management of funded children is outstanding. The management team provide inspirational and motivational leadership of the setting. There is a very clear vision to provide the best quality care and learning for children. Every decision is totally child-focused and carefully considered. The management team are constantly evaluating and reviewing practice and seeking innovative ways of working. There are superb systems in place to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the Nursery Education. Comprehensive documentation is regularly updated which is owned and understood by all staff. It provides clear and useful information and helps all staff to quickly identify if there are any concerns about a child's progress in any area and to see at a glance how rapid the progress is.

Overall, children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the nursery was asked to develop the staff register to ensure a record is maintained of staff leaving the premises at lunchtime and to ensure that information regarding child protection issues is updated.

A clear and detailed record is maintained of staff arrival and departure times throughout the day. Information regarding child protection issues has been fully updated. As a result children's safety and welfare is fully promoted.

At the last Nursery Education inspection the nursery was asked to evaluate the balance between adult-directed and child-initiated activities to ensure children gain the most from the activities provided and to continue to develop the programme for physical development to ensure more able children's large physical skills are challenged appropriately.

Significant progress has been made in both of these areas. Child initiated activities are highlighted on the planning and children have lots of choice and make regular decisions about what they do during the day. Ideas generated by the children are fully supported by staff and sufficient time is given for children to spend as much time as they want to develop this. The programme for physical development ensures that children engage in a broad range of activities that consistently develops their large physical skills and provides appropriate challenge. As a result children make rapid progress towards the early learning goals within the Foundation Stage.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 1 April 2004 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 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 outstanding. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are outstanding.

WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of care are outstanding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of nursery education are outstanding.

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