

The Acorns Nursery School

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector	Jo Graham
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Type of setting	Childcare on non-domestic premises

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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*.

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Description of the setting

The Acorns Nursery School is a privately owned provision, which opened in 1984 and is registered on the Early Years Register. It operates from domestic premises situated in a residential area of Tilehurst in Berkshire. Children have access to all areas on the ground floor. A maximum of 21 children in the early years age group may attend at any one time. The nursery opens five days a week during term time only and children can attend for flexible session times. Morning sessions are from 9.30am to 12.30pm Monday to Friday and cater for the older children. Afternoon sessions are held from 1.30pm to 4pm Monday to Thursday for the younger children. In addition, children can stay for a lunch club from 12.30pm to 1.30pm on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays. A fully enclosed garden is available for outside play. The nursery school serves families from the local community and surrounding areas. There are currently 49 children on roll. The setting receives nursery education funding for three- and four-year olds. The setting currently supports a number of children with special educational needs and also makes provision for children who speak English as an additional language. The nursery employs seven members of staff. Of these, four are qualified teachers and one is a qualified nursery nurse. Currently, one member of staff is working towards a suitable qualification.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

Staff effectively promote and support inclusion as they recognise, value and respect the uniqueness of each child. Children's learning and well-being thrives and flourishes as staff provide a very stimulating, safe and enabling environment. Staff actively assess and monitor the provision to maintain the existing high standards and to continually develop their practice. Partnerships with parents are highly effective and significantly impact on children's continuity of care and learning. Most systems in place to build up relationships between providers and other agencies benefit children's all round development.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the high quality early years provision the registered person should consider:

- increasing additional methods to further develop partnerships with others .

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Staff have a comprehensive awareness of safeguarding issues and all receive regular safeguarding training. Effectively policies and procedures are in place to ensure any concerns are prioritised and dealt with promptly. Children's safety is safeguarded by thorough and effective vetting procedures as well as comprehensive risk assessments. Children show an excellent understanding of safety issues and they recognise and become aware of how to keep themselves safe. They remember to push their chairs under tables after use, handle toys and equipment with care and use the climbing apparatus safely. Children show an excellent understanding of the expected standards of behaviour and apply these to keep themselves and others safe. For example, staff sensitively supervise children to enable them to successfully resolve their own conflicts.

Continuous improvement is a high priority and excellent systems are in place to monitor and evaluate current practices. All staff have a very positive attitude to sustain existing high standards and all play a major role in the continual improvement to the provision. As a result, outcomes in children's achievements and well-being are exceptionally high. Staff record accurate and evaluative observations of children's current levels of development and note their next steps to further increase their achievements in all areas of learning. They use these assessments effectively to inform future planning needs and to complete the summary of achievement forms for parents to share in their child's progress. Resources, furniture and equipment are developmentally and age appropriate, in very good condition, clean and easily accessible to children. The wide selection available supports children's varying abilities and contributes significantly to their development in all six areas of learning. Equality and diversity practices are highly effective. For example, the integration and inclusion of all children ensure that their unique needs are met and children are encouraged to recognise their own unique qualities and the characteristics they share with others. Anti-discriminatory practice is actively promoted so that all children and families feel included and valued.

Children benefit significantly from staff developing very strong partnerships between parents and carers. Staff ensure parents and carers are very well informed about all aspects of their child's achievements, well-being and development. Staff welcome and actively encourage parents and carers to contribute their views and suggestions, which they do with confidence. At the inspection, the parents expressed their immense contentment and admiration with the service. They fully appreciate how staff skilfully educate their children in a loving and caring environment, as well as promoting high standards of social skills. Most systems to exchange information with other settings and agencies are good, contributing to children's well-being and care.

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

Children are very secure, self-assured and develop a strong sense of belonging to the setting. By accessing challenges in their play and effective support from staff, children develop excellent problem solving skills. For example, a group of children discovered that if they added additional surfaces to the ramp, the cars went faster and further. The vast range of easily accessible resources contributes significantly to children's learning and to them fulfilling their potential. Children build up strong relationships with their peers and staff and play in co-operation very well. They respect one another and acknowledge other's differences through sensitive support.

Staff are extremely attentive, considerate and fully aware of the children's interests and likes. They keenly support children to make informed choices about what to play with as well as encouraging them to join in adult-led play sessions, such as the traffic jam game. Children especially enjoy the group singing session around the piano. They recognise the tunes when the introduction is played and then join in enthusiastically with the words and actions. Children benefit significantly from staff's excellent knowledge of their individual abilities and developmental milestones. Staff ask effective questions to help children think, enable them to explore through play and foster their enthusiasm to learn. Children strongly benefit from accessing a full, interesting and appealing curriculum both inside and outdoors. They move between these areas confidently as they select their choices. For example, they dig in the garden with child-sized spades, mark make on the patio using chalk and build robots with construction equipment. Staff's effective guidance and reassurances boost children's self-esteem very well and fosters their curiosity to explore.

During daily routines, children show their very good understanding of healthy practices as they know they need to wash their hands before snacks and after using the toilet. They notice how the hand gel disappears when they rub their hands together and keenly share this with the group. Children develop a vast range of useful skills for the future by accessing a wide variety of activities. They are lively, competent communicators who express their ideas and thoughts with self-assurance in the knowledge that these points of view are highly valued. They mark make regularly within their play, gaining emergent writing skills and access an assortment of programmable toys recognising that they can operate equipment by pressing buttons. They begin to count and subtract in everyday situations. For example, during the singing session and fishing for numbered ducks in the water tray.

Children become aware of the wider world through visits to the local community and partaking in celebrations. They visit the local church to celebrate Harvest Festival and then visit the elderly to share out the food donated and enjoy holding a street party to celebrate the recent Royal wedding. Staff's extensive knowledge of the Early Years Foundation Stage framework and effective interventions, significantly contributes to children's learning and continued enjoyment.

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?	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	1

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	1
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding	1
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	1
The effectiveness of partnerships	2
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	1

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	1
The extent to which children feel safe	1
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	1
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	1

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