

# The Ace Children's Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

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**Unique reference number** 133481  
**Inspection date** 03/11/2008  
**Inspector** Jenny Read

**Setting address** Burford Road, Chipping Norton, Oxfordshire, OX7 5DZ

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**Type of setting** Childcare on non-domestic premises

## 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 report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration whichever is the later, which require Ofsted or the provider to take action in Annex C.

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.

## Description of the setting

The Ace Children's Centre is a full service centre operating from a converted school in the town of Chipping Norton. The centre provides a variety of children's services including Gems Day Nursery and The Out of School Scheme. Both these services have charitable status and are managed by a Board of Trustees. The Ace Children's Centre also provides a number of other services which include: a family centre; lunch club; Ace playtime for two year olds; Saturday dad's group; health suite; adult learning facilities; outreach support to and families; parenting support; a forest school provision. There is a stair lift and ramp access to all areas of the centre.

Gems day nursery operates from three interlinked rooms on graduated levels, a sleep room, kitchen, bathroom facilities and staff room. They have use of an enclosed garden with impact absorbent surfaces for outdoor activities and play. The day nursery offers full and sessional day care and wrap around care from 08.00 until 18.00 for a maximum of 22 children from three months to the end of the early years age group. There are currently 48 children on roll, of these, 6 receive their funding for nursery education within the nursery school.

The Out of School Scheme operates from the hall and adjacent stage room and has sole use of the large impact absorbent playground, allotment and grassed area during operating times. The scheme offers both after school and holiday care for a maximum of 32 children. There are currently 47 children on roll. Of these, 15 children are within the early years age group and 9 children within the compulsory part of the Childcare Register. Additional care is provided for children over eight years in the voluntary part of the Childcare Register. The scheme is open from 08.00 until 09.00 and from 15.00 until 18.00 during school terms. The holiday scheme offers care from 08.00 until 18.00 during school holidays (except for one week at Christmas).

The nursery school is run by the Local Authority and operates from one large room, staff room and bathroom facilities. There is an enclosed graduated outdoor area with grass, wild area, allotment and impact absorbent surfaces. There are currently 56 children on roll within the early years age group all receiving funding for nursery education. Children attend for a variety of sessions between 09.00 and 15.15. The teachers based in the nursery school works across the setting.

The centre employs 36 staff. Four staff including the Acting Directors have degree level qualifications or Qualified Teacher Status; 19 staff hold early years or playwork qualifications to level two or three. Eight members of staff are currently working towards a level three or Foundation Degree level qualification.

## Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

The environment in which the children play, including the innovative and spacious outside areas are vibrant and a contributory factor in enhancing children's learning and ability to initiate their own play. Children's individual needs are met to a high standard by staff who are proactive in ensuring they have excellent knowledge of

the individual needs of the children in their care. The very committed and motivated staff work very effectively as a whole team and are a key strength of the centre. The inter-agency working is exceptional providing outstanding support for children and their parents and carers. The high emphasis on nurturing close partnerships with parents is a particular strength which ensures they are well informed and able to take an active part in the different services available. The centre makes very good use of self evaluation to identify key strengths and areas for development in children's learning and satisfactory account is taken of recommendations made through inspection. However systems are not yet sufficiently robust to ensure that all gaps are identified within other aspects of children's care meaning some welfare issues are incomplete.

## **What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?**

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

- ensure the accident book is shared with parents and contains necessary details to promote the good health of children
- develop the use of self evaluation to ensure any gaps in practice and previous recommendations are clearly identified and addressed
- ensure the record of attendance consistently shows staff's attendance for the safe and efficient management of the setting

To fully meet the specific requirements of the EYFS, the registered person must:

- request written permission from parents for seeking emergency medical advice or treatment (Safeguarding) (also applies to both parts of the Childcare Register) 21/11/2008
- devise and maintain all policies and procedures, with particular regard to complaints and safeguarding children (Documentation) (also applies to both parts of the Childcare Register) 22/12/2008

## **The leadership and management of the early years provision**

The management team are strong and highly committed to the children, parents and centre as a whole, setting a good example and providing patient support for staff. Consequently, staff feel valued and enjoy their job. There is a strong emphasis on encouraging staff's personal and professional development, providing excellent opportunities to attend training. Secure recruitment, vetting and induction procedures ensure that all adults working with the children and families are suitable to do so. All staff are knowledgeable about their own roles and responsibilities in safeguarding children and have shared awareness and training sessions across the centre.

The successful organisation of the centre and development of cross centre working means children's and parent's needs are well met. Staff with particular skill sets work within the separate departments to provide specialised programmes for parents, effective support and inclusion for all children and outstanding education in the nursery school. Extremely positive links and excellent communication between the children's services and different professional agencies ensure all children receive high quality support and achieve as well as they can. Exemplary partnerships with parents in the welcoming family centre and high quality involvement of parents in the nursery school and GEMS are a contributory factor to the success of the centre and in meeting children's needs. The broad programme of activities help parents to gain skills in supporting their children's play and learning. Parents receive comprehensive information about their children's progress in the nursery school and are able to contribute to assessments made on their child. As a consequence, they take an active part in their children's learning and have good understanding of their child's progress. Through the process of evaluating the quality of what they do, GEMS have successfully identified the need to reintroduce parent consultations to ensure parents are well informed about their child's progress and able to support their learning at home.

Children are competent and creative learners and are making very good progress from their starting points because staff demonstrate a secure understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage learning requirements. Twice yearly implementation of the Infant/Toddler Environmental Rating Scale (ITERS) and Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale (ECERS) systems successfully monitor and drive the education provision. As a result, children are thriving and making outstanding progress in their learning in the nursery school and good progress in GEMS. Regular whole centre, senior management and departmental meetings and frequent questionnaires ensures all staff and parents are involved in the evaluation process. However, systems to evaluate and assess care elements within the setting to identify areas for improvement are insecure. Consequently, there are several paperwork and policy issues that have not been addressed, including inconsistent recording of staff's attendance, no complaints policy and an incomplete safeguarding policy. Overall, records, policies and procedures are well understood and use of other quality checks, such as risk assessments are used effectively to promote the welfare of children.

## **The quality and standards of the early years provision**

Children are making very good progress in their learning, because information regarding their achievements, interests and needs is used successfully to support children in taking the next step in their learning and development. As a consequence, staff know their key children very well and are very attentive, enabling children to build close relationships. Children benefit from staff's dynamic, positive and uninhibited approach to their learning, enabling them to have fun and enjoy what they are doing. The wealth of good quality equipment, resources and props are attractively displayed and accessible which has a positive impact on their confidence and motivation. Ways of sharing resources from the nursery to GEMS are being explored to further extend children's choices, particularly technology

resources. The older children have devised a folder of drawings and photographs of all the toys, activities and games available to enable them to see more clearly what resources are available.

Children show respect for their peers and develop a highly positive attitude towards their own and other cultures, traditions and the wider world through exciting topic work, easy access to excellent artefacts, interactive displays and appropriate discussions. As a result, children stated they enjoy coming to the centre and playing with their peers. A key strength is the centre's commitment to inclusion. Weekly visits from the highly knowledgeable special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) maximises support for staff, enabling extremely positive discussion and feedback about children's development and next steps. In addition, weekly meetings between the SENCO, teacher, relevant key person and manager in GEMS ensures high quality information is shared to enable children with identified learning and/or disabilities to receive consistent, purposeful support.

Children are very confident in their surroundings because all areas of the centre are very well planned with clear focus throughout to proactively encourage children's independence. For example, most children pour their own drinks, help with preparing snack and meet their own personal care needs. Children's experiences are significantly enhanced by thoughtful and well-developed planning of the nursery school's dynamic outdoor area by bringing the indoor learning out and empowering children to freely make decisions about where they play and learn. They explore the wild area, dig and grow their own plants and vegetables in the large allotment, investigate the sand, act out plays on the stage and develop large physical skills on the various fixed climbing equipment. Both children and parents across the centre utilise this main garden in addition to their own garden areas. Staff are continually striving to make improvements for children and are currently looking at ways to provide free-flowing indoor and outdoor play in GEMS in the afternoons without lowering the temperature of the room for the youngest children.

Children gain resilience and a strong sense of themselves through good quality planning that enables them to become critical thinkers and creative learners. Careful consideration is given to all six areas of learning ensuring stimulating and interesting activities and group times are well thought through to meet individual needs. Children are engrossed in the vibrant and inspired book corner, creative area, home corner, block play and technology areas of the nursery school where staff are on hand to assist when needed. As a result, children are highly skilled in their use of information technology and readily share books together. Effective questioning and interaction from most staff supports and challenges children's play and learning. Children engage easily in conversations with each other and in small and large groups, confidently sharing news, asking questions and making up their own narratives for a story. The younger children establish their own identity and personalities as staff are attentive to the different ways babies communicate, continually interacting and making eye contact.

Children are skilled in their use of numbers, mostly utilising daily routines to reinforce their learning by counting the number of children present and cups at snack time. Children enjoy practising their emergent writing skills and scribe their

own stories. They are very inventive, eagerly designing a poster to advertise their puppet show, making credit cards for the till and excitedly taking on different roles. They use their own first hand experiences to extend their play further with intuitive ideas and challenges from staff. Younger children in the out of school club understand the agreed values and codes of behaviour as they compile, agree and display these each term in conjunction with their older peers. As a result, they are well behaved, respectful of themselves and each other and are empowered to police and manage their own behaviour.

Children's safety needs are well met because staff demonstrate sound knowledge and implementation of safety policies and procedures. Children learn how to keep themselves safe through frequent practise of the escape plan and clearly recall the robust safety rules for their weekly visits to Forest school. Many children recall the benefits of physical activity and fresh air and learn to take risks safely. Children's health care needs are generally well met. They know hand washing routines and enjoy healthy options for snack. However, systems for checking first aid boxes, completing the accident books and ensuring parental permission to seek emergency medical advice or treatment are in place for all groups of children are not secure.

## 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*

### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?</b>	2
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	3

### Leadership and management

<b>How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?</b>	2
How effective is the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement?	3
How well does the setting work in partnership with parents and others?	1
How well are children safeguarded?	2

### Quality and standards

<b>How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?</b>	2
<b>How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?</b>	3
How well are children helped to stay safe?	2
How well are children helped to be healthy?	3
How well are children helped to enjoy and achieve?	2
How well are children helped to make a positive contribution?	1
How well are children helped develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	1

Any complaints about the inspection or report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)



## Annex B: the Childcare Register

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are:

Not Met (with actions)

The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are:

Not Met (with actions)

The registered provider does not meet the requirements of the compulsory and or voluntary part/s of the Childcare Register.

To comply with the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register, the registered person must take the following action/s by the specified date:

- take action as specified in the Early Years section of the report 21/11/2008
- take action as specified in the voluntary part of the Childcare Register. 22/12/2008

To comply with the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register, the registered person must take the following action/s by the specified date:

- make available to parents copies of written statements of complaints and safeguarding procedures (also applies to the Compulsory part of the Childcare Register) 22/12/2008

## **Annex C: complaint/s made to Ofsted**

This section of the report includes details of any complaint/s made to Ofsted when:

- we took action for the provider to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register; or
- we asked the provider to take action in order to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register; or
- the provider had already taken any necessary action to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register.

We will not report on any complaint where the provider met the requirements of the Early Years Register or did not require any action by Ofsted or the registered provider.

### **Detail of the complaint/s**

Since the last inspection, there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action.

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.