

Acorns Nursery School Ltd

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number EY369943
Inspection date 23/01/2009
Inspector Angela Cole

Setting address 10 Park Street, CIRENCESTER, Gloucestershire, GL7 2BN

Telephone number 01285 655 505
Email info@acornscirencester.com
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

Acorns Nursery School Ltd opened in 2005 as a limited company and was re-registered in 2008. It is situated in a 17th century three-storey building close to the centre of Cirencester, Gloucestershire. The nursery school operates from five rooms with a separate three-room baby unit. There are three enclosed garden with grass and paved areas to the rear of the property for children's outdoor play. There is access to the building for disabled persons. The nursery school is open each weekday between 08.00 and 18.00 all year round. Before and after school and holiday care is offered at the Mighty Oaks club which has 150 families on roll. The provider is on the Early Years Register and on the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. There are currently 99 children in the early years age group on roll and of these, 31 children receive funding for early education. Children come from within the town or from the surrounding area. The nursery school currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language. The co-directors who take an active part in the day-to-day running of the setting both have qualified teacher status. One has Early Years Professional Status and one is working toward a Level 6 Diploma in Playwork. The nursery employs 19 members of staff. Of these, 14 hold appropriate early years qualifications. Six members of staff are working towards a qualification and two others are gaining a further qualification. A bank of staff is available for cover. The nursery uses aspects of the Reggio Emilia educational approach. Partnership arrangements are in place with other early years settings.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

The nursery school effectively meets the needs of all children through recognising their uniqueness to provide a highly inclusive and welcoming service that includes excellent health care. Children in all age groups progress well in their learning and development as they eagerly focus on their choice of interesting play activities. They are supported by enthusiastic, interactive staff who are aware of children's individual interests to focus on some of their needs and begin to monitor progress. Adults strive to work in close partnership with parents and most other providers to ensure that children's learning and welfare needs are met, and the majority of required documents are in place for their safeguarding. In-depth reflection ensures that plans for the future are well targeted to bring about further improvement to the provision and outcomes for children.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- update the wording of the policy to be in line with Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) guidance and procedures
- retain proof that parents are informed of any accident or injury sustained by the child whilst in the care of the provider and of any first aid treatment that

was given.

- extend links between observation and regular planning for all children, frequently monitoring their progress so that key persons are aware of their next steps in each area of learning
- expand the programme for working in partnership so the provision is appropriate and complementary for all children.

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

- assess the risks to children in relation to display materials and access to the kitchen and take action to minimise these. (Suitable premises, environment and equipment)

26/01/2009

The leadership and management of the early years provision

The management is knowledgeable and able to engage and involve others in ideas, innovations and goals for the nursery school. Well qualified staff are skilfully motivated to provide a stimulating learning environment for children and effective appraisal supports adults' professional development to respond to their developmental needs. The varied spaces in the setting are used effectively to ensure children can play cooperatively, alongside others or independently as they choose. High quality toys and materials are easily accessible in each area to allow children to choose and select for themselves as they play. Individually developed policies and procedures relating to safeguarding and aspects of children's welfare and development are thoroughly implemented in practice, though terms in the policy on child protection require updating. Detailed risk assessment that covers most aspects of children's safety, apart from display materials and access to the kitchen, is conducted and regularly reviewed so that children are secure and safe. This is supported through robust systems, including daily checks on resources and monitoring of sleeping children. Children's personal documents are detailed and informative, therefore promoting excellent quality healthcare and inclusive practice.

Good partnerships are established with parents and carers, while ongoing exchange of a wealth of information ensures that they contribute to the children's well-being and development. For example, families are always informed about any accidents to children, though proof of this communication is not always retained. Several systems for sharing information on routines, progress and interests are enthusiastically offered to parents so they may be actively involved in their children's learning. Supportive relationships are established with external services to ensure children have the support they need, including with the area special educational needs coordinator. Good links are made with some of the other providers delivering the Early Years Foundation Stage for children at the setting. These include schools and groups providing support for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to ensure their progression and continuity of learning and care. The management is highly committed to improving knowledge and

practice as staff, parents and children are effectively included in evaluating the provision's strengths and areas for development. As a result, considerable training is being undertaken so that planning is increasingly driven by observation of the children's interests and enhanced opportunities for children's outdoor play in all weathers are being developed.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Children make very good progress in their development and learning. This is because adults have, or are gaining, a secure knowledge of the Early Years Foundation Stage, as demonstrated in clear photographic displays of children's work in different areas. The learning environment is very supportive to help children progress towards the early learning goals and the wide range of high quality resources effectively promotes children's choice from a young age. Babies enjoy exploring the varied materials available to them, including many attractive treasure baskets; toddlers have good access to creative activities, such as painting. Pre-school spaces are thoughtfully organised to encourage whole group, small group and individual activities in clearly defined activity areas. Attractive displays around the nursery school are well annotated to enhance children's learning through self-esteem gained in recalling enjoyable activities and familiarity with an environment rich in print. The planning cycle is effective because each child enjoys challenging experiences across the areas of learning. For example, babies explore paint packets, toddlers investigate textures during shared painting, while older children learn about contrasts of shades and cooperate to make a floor domino game. All staff observe children's play to clearly identify their starting points and key persons use these effectively to plan next steps in learning based upon aspects that some of the children are interested in. The assessment shows achievement in examples of their work in diaries and photographs, though the system for monitoring progress across the areas of learning is in its infancy. The staff's interaction is highly appropriate so that children are consistently interested, motivated, involved. As a result, children have time to develop their interests as far as they wish, for example, as they look at the detail on old buildings, find internet maps, create their own street and pace out the rooms to find realistic measurements. Planned, purposeful play is well encouraged by considered organisation of the indoor and outdoor spaces that are usually available on a free-flow basis. There is a very good balance of adult-initiated and child-led activities that results in children being active, creative learners. For example, babies are well encouraged to use their imaginations in home play while older ones are absorbed in exploring illuminated objects to see how their colours appear to change. Children are strongly encouraged to think critically and to solve their own problems, such as those arising when they create their own 'marble run' with balls and guttering.

Very good steps are taken by key persons to promote the welfare of the children. The children's economic development is highly supported as they develop varied skills that contribute to their future well-being. Adults help children to make as much progress as they can in communicating, literacy, numeracy and technology. They talk about their ideas and feelings, such as what makes them happy, and how many in a 'pair'. They develop good habits as active and independent

learners, for example, to explore sounds for themselves and develop good self-care skills in dressing, eating and leaving play areas tidy for others. They gain collaborative skills and develop problem solving when focusing in small groups, for example, on building of complex models. They begin to understand the wider world as demonstrated through their role play and communications, including confident delivery of messages. Key staff are very aware of children's needs with good interaction at personal care times, including for changing and sleep. They are alert so that, in practice, children are effectively safeguarded. From a young age, children gain a good understanding of dangers and how to stay safe by taking appropriate, supervised risks. For example, toddlers become adept at negotiating stairs, pre-schoolers build with logs and older ones make their own reflective bands and practise road safety when walking back from school. Through staff's calm, caring encouragement, they behave in ways that are safe for themselves and others, learning how to carry items such as scissors and cooperating by sharing toys. Older ones are well involved in setting their own rules so learn to manage their own behaviour with appropriate support. Children gain an excellent understanding about a healthy lifestyle from frequent, outdoor activity and learning personal hygiene routines from a young age, such as thorough hand washing. Strong, prominently displayed steps are taken to prevent the spread of infection and immediate action is taken when children are ill. Healthy eating and drinking are highly promoted throughout the nursery school so that pre-schoolers talk about healthy foods they enjoy and create a 'eat well plate' using different food groups.

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

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

Leadership and management

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

Quality and standards

How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?	2
How well are children helped to stay safe?	2
How well are children helped to be healthy?	1
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?	2

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

Annex B: the Childcare Register

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

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

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 registration Ofsted has received a complaint that required the provider to take action. Concerns were raised that the provision continued to operate a gas boiler in one section of the nursery after its use had been prohibited. We carried out a visit and set an action for the provider to ensure that the boiler was no longer in use and the provider took the required steps. The provider remained suitable for registration at the time the investigation closed.

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.