

# Acorns Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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**Unique reference number** EY266330  
**Inspection date** 17/03/2009  
**Inspector** Rachael Flesher

**Setting address** The Old Police House, Little Market Place, Masham, North  
Yorkshire, HG4 4DY

**Telephone number** 01765 680203

**Email**

**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 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 Pre-school was registered in 2003. It is a committee run group held in the former Old Police House, now operating as a community building, in the centre of Masham. The pre-school have sole use of the annexe at the back of the building. This consists of one room with a private entrance and adjacent toilet facilities. The group also have the use of a small kitchen. There is an enclosed space for outdoor play.

The pre-school is registered on the Early Years Register and both parts of the Childcare register to care for 20 children in the early years age group and there are currently 32 children on roll attending on a part-time basis. The nursery is in receipt of funding for the provision of free early education to children aged three and four. Links are in place with other local childcare providers, schools and the children centre. The facility is open from 09:15 to 15:15, Monday to Friday term time only. There is also provision for school holiday care.

The staff team comprises a manager and deputy, supported by two assistants and two bank staff. The manager has a level 4 qualifications and is working towards a degree. The deputy manager has a level 3 qualification and is working towards a foundation degree and the assistants also have relevant training and experience. The setting is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance.

## Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding. The manager has an ambition for excellence and a clear vision for the future of the setting and there is an atmosphere of infectious enthusiasm, where staff and the committee are highly motivated and committed to providing the very best outcomes for children. Strong links with the local community, parents and other professionals coupled with the whole team's engagement in reflective practice and robust planning for improvement, contribute significantly to the high quality of the provision. This ensures all children's needs are met and their protection is assured. Observant and knowledgeable staff provide excellent personalised play, learning and development opportunities for all children and as a result they are making exceptional progress.

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

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

- continue to evaluate the practice and provision to identify the key strengths and areas for development to ensure the best outcomes for children

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

The manager leads a collaborative learning culture providing extensive support for continuous professional development for all staff. This ensures staff have up to date skills and qualifications, are motivated and supported to progress and develop. Highly effective quality improvement tools are applied and staff work collaboratively to share knowledge, question practice and test new ideas to maintain and enhance practice. The manager regularly carries out robust reviews, involving the whole team and management committee, and actively seeks the views of parents, children and external advisors and agencies to inform their self-evaluation. They use this feedback, their own reflections and observations and recommendations set at the last inspection, to inform priorities and devise purposeful strategies for improvement. Roles and responsibilities are delegated to ensure these improvements are implemented successfully. These steps ensure continual improvement in the effectiveness of provision, and the developments made to date have had a significant impact on the outcomes for all children.

Documentation is organised methodically and highly effective systems, policies and procedures are in place that underpin this exemplary provision. These are shared with all concerned and are used to monitor, review and improve practice. Parents feel valued and the setting has a welcoming atmosphere with approachable staff, creating effective communication through two way flow of information, knowledge and expertise between parents and staff. The manager actively encourages key staff to spend time with parents to gather detailed information about their children to help plan for each child's particular needs and support is provided for extending learning in the home. Children's records are used to demonstrate the quality of the provision they offer and the exceptional progress children make. Highly effective information sharing systems and partnerships working with the local children centre, other professionals, schools and providers ensure all children and their families receive the support they need. As a result children are safeguarded, included, their welfare promoted and their needs fully met.

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

The provision is welcoming, resources reflect the children in their care and the society they live in and local events important to a child. This helps children and their families feel valued and included. The manager and staff promote positive attitudes to diversity and difference, ensuring that every child is included and not disadvantaged and children's individual needs are properly recognised and met. Through the successful key person systems, partnership with parents and other professionals, and the sensitive observations carried out, any additional and unique needs are identified early and children are fully supported to enable every child to fulfil their potential. All planning starts with ongoing information provided by parents and observing each child in order to understand and consider their unique skills and abilities and what helps them continue to be excited and motivated to learn. Staff make systematic observations and assessments of each child's achievements, interests and learning styles and use this information to identify learning priorities and to plan relevant and motivating experiences using the early

learning goals. Records are used effectively to successfully track and demonstrate each child's excellent progress across the six areas of learning.

The exceptional quality of the provision for children's welfare and learning and development is highly successful in promoting the outcomes for children. Children are extremely healthy, safe and secure. Staff have a highly positive approach to teaching children how to keep themselves safe and be healthy, providing interesting learning opportunities to significantly enhance their understanding and promote their well-being. The manager and staff have successfully created an enabling, richly resourced environment, both indoors and outdoors, where all children have opportunities to make independent choices providing them with freedom to follow their interests. Excellent continuous provision is readily accessible to all children and uninterrupted time is provided for them to become thoroughly absorbed and engaged in their play and learning. Staff are well deployed to provide support to scaffold children's learning. Adults and children engage in sustained shared thinking, with adults supporting and challenging children's thinking, working together to develop an idea or skill, while skilfully ensuring a balance between adult-led and child initiated activities.

The indoor and outdoor learning environment is extensively enhanced in response to children's changing interests to ensure it is relevant and meaningful to them. Resources and challenges are presented to stimulate children to solve problems, using reasoning and where necessary, number skills to do so. Mark making materials are in different parts of the setting and promoted through role play activities by providing items that reflect real-life activities such as notebooks by the telephone in the outdoor garden centre and shopping lists in the home corner. The learning environment further reflects the importance of language, literacy and number through books, labels and signs, and adults provide a rich menu of songs, stories, rhymes and activities on a daily basis. Creative experiences are provided to develop curiosity, innovation and imagination and children enjoy using a range of natural resources and information and communication technology to explore and investigate, developing their knowledge and understanding of the world. Soft spaces give children emotional comfort and provide opportunities for rest. Effective relationships with key persons and the use of puppets and an empathy doll foster children's emotional and social development and promote their self esteem and confidence. The local area and public spaces such as parks, shops, local market and library and members of the community are well utilised to further extend and support the learning environment.

## 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>	1
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	1

### Leadership and management

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

### Quality and standards

<b>How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?</b>	1
<b>How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?</b>	1
How well are children helped to stay safe?	1
How well are children helped to be healthy?	1
How well are children helped to enjoy and achieve?	1
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

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## **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