

# Acorn at Cedars

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	EY290049
<b>Inspection date</b>	17/03/2009
<b>Inspector</b>	Christopher Parker
<b>Setting address</b>	Cedars County Combined School, Bury Street, Newport Pagnell, Buckinghamshire, MK16 0DT
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<b>Type of setting</b>	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**

Acorn at Cedars is operated by the Acorn Childcare group and was registered on the Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register and Voluntary Childcare Register in 2005. It is situated on the site of the Cedars Combined School in Newport Pagnell. There are 93 children on roll. The nursery is open from 07.30 to 18.00 throughout the year. A maximum of 29 children may attend at any one time. It is housed in detached accommodation with an enclosed outdoor area and employs 10 staff who are led by the manager and deputy manager. They are well qualified. One holds a degree in Early Year Education, the other a level 3 qualification and is in the final year of her degree. Six other practitioners hold at least the minimum requirement of a level 2 qualification.

The out of school provision is located within the school building. It is registered to care for 24 children aged three to eight years and accepts children up to 11 years. The breakfast session is open in term time from 08.00 to 08.50 and the after school session from 15.10 to 18.00. One child, under the age of five, attends before, and two attend after school care.

## **Overall effectiveness of the early years provision**

Early years provision at Acorn at Cedars is outstanding. The commitment of all of the practitioners generates a warm and welcoming atmosphere where the children participate in a wide range of activities that strongly enhance their learning and development. A very inclusive approach results in the needs of the children being very well met. The management is highly organised and ensures the provision runs very smoothly. The practitioners are very reflective and are continually looking for ways to improve. Consequently, there is good capacity for further improvement.

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

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

- make more extensive use of self evaluation to provide the basis for improvement planning
- make full use of information collected from observation and assessment to plan activities that meet the needs of individuals and small groups

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

The nursery is benefiting considerably from a stable, motivated and well qualified team of practitioners. A strong commitment to training results in a highly focused approach to helping the children to make rapid progress in their learning and development, and in strongly promoting their welfare. A number of recent improvements to the organisation of the nursery, for example, establishing clearly

delineated areas so that practitioners can provide more activities that are appropriate to each age group have led to very positive comments from parents.

Policies and procedures are very clear, comprehensively documented and fully implemented. For example, parental requests for children to be given medicines are recorded along with the amount and time the medicine was administered. The process is monitored at each stage. Procedures to safeguard the children's welfare are well established. Checks are carried out on all practitioners, when they are appointed, to make sure they are suitable to work with young children. The very thorough management and organisation applies equally to before and after school care.

Self evaluation takes good account of the views of children, parents and staff. For example, as a result of observation and talking to the older children there are now book corners for each age group. Parents' views are sought through questionnaires, analysed and acted upon. The most recent analysis shows that parents hold the nursery in high regard and this was reflected in discussion and through observations of interactions between practitioners and parents. The formal recording of self evaluation is developing well but, currently, it is not linked closely enough to the development plan. Nevertheless, this is an area that is developing rapidly through training under the strong leadership of the manager.

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

The practitioners provide the children with very creative and engaging activities both in, and out of doors, and an environment, that stimulates very effective learning and development. For example, following the theme of the Three Little Pigs the outdoor area was prepared with straw, wooden building blocks and withy, and large plastic brick. With constant adult encouragement and involvement the children explored the materials, talked about them and then tried to 'blow the house down'. The children were interested and inquisitive, greatly enjoying these opportunities to learn through the use of excellently resourced activities. One parent wrote in response to the most recent questionnaire of their views, 'You are very creative and use a huge variety of materials which help the children to develop their imagination and discover the world at the same time as having fun.'

The practitioners are very calm and consistent in their dealings with the children in the nursery and the before and after school clubs. Supervision is extremely vigilant with comprehensive records kept of all those in attendance. Hygiene is strongly promoted. For example, the younger children had their hands washed and dried before eating their mid-morning snack. For the older children this is a social time where they develop a sense of community. Snacks and meals are healthy and well balanced.

The quality of planning is good and draws on the information collected from observation and assessment. However, assessments made by the practitioners do not always identify the next step for the child and therefore some of the planning is not as tailored to the individual child as it could be. The practitioners are constantly observing the children and recording their responses and how they are

developing. Records of these observations are very well presented, often supplemented by considerable photographic evidence. These records illustrate very well the very good progress the children are making and the thoroughness of their preparation for the next stage in their learning and development.

The welfare of the children is promoted extremely well because the policies and procedures underlying this very important area are comprehensive and consistently implemented. This degree of consistency is testament to the training provided for the practitioners and the leadership of the manager who is very effectively supported by her deputy in establishing high aspirations for all aspects of the provision.

## 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.	2

### 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?	2
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?	2
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](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:

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**

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since the last inspection.

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.