

Acorns Pre School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number 508710
Inspection date 11/05/2009
Inspector Cheryl Thompson

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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 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 opened in 1992. It operates from a demountable classroom in the grounds of St Andrews School in the village of Great Yeldham. The pre-school serves the local area and is registered on the Early Years and the voluntary and compulsory Childcare Registers. The facilities and access are suitable for the disabled. A maximum of 18 children may attend at one time. There are currently 32 children aged from two to almost five years on roll. The setting can support children with learning difficulties and disabilities and those for whom English is an additional language. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The pre-school opens five days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 09.00 to 11.30 Monday to Thursday and, on Friday, the session for children 'rising five' is from 08.45 to 12.15. This session incorporates a lunch club. There are two afternoon sessions predominantly for the youngest children. These are from 12.30 to 15.00 on Tuesday and Thursday. Five part-time staff work with the children. Over half the staff have early years qualifications to NVQ level 2 or 3. The setting receives support from a teacher/mentor from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP) and is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance (PSLA). The pre-school has also developed very close links with St Andrews School and receives regular visits from the head teacher and liaises closely with the reception class teacher.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Acorns provides good pre-school education and care. It meets the needs of the early years children well. Key strengths are the good links with parents and excellent co-operation with the primary school, which allows children the use of the school's outside grounds and facilities and ensures a very smooth transition to full-time schooling. Well trained staff are successful in promoting all aspects of children's welfare and learning, particularly so in making sure all children are included in all the setting offers. Children make good progress in their learning and in their personal development. The capacity for further improvement is good.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- identify in planning exactly what individual children need to learn next
- improve staff understanding of how basic literacy and numeracy skills are taught in order to increase the rate at which children progress.

The leadership and management of the early years provision

Staff work as an effective team to promote children's learning and well-being. Children's safety and welfare are high priorities. Policies and practice for child protection, for dealing with accidents and illness and for checking the suitability of

all adults who work with the children meet current requirements. Checks of equipment, the building and outside areas ensure they are safe for children to use. In spite of a high turnover of staff, parents confirm that there has been good improvement since the last inspection. Self-evaluation is developing well. It is not yet formalised but it is already thorough enough to give staff a clear picture of strengths and areas to develop further. For example, developing further the expertise of new staff through effective liaison with the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership. Strong links with the primary school ensure that the teaching and learning of letter sounds and mathematical concepts are approached in a similar manner. However, the leaders recognise that staff need more training in this area so that more can be done to help children develop their early literacy and numeracy skills at an even better rate. These strong links, in particular with the Reception class teacher, also ensure that the transition from the setting to school is a smooth and positive experience. Links with parents and carers are good; there are many informal, yet effective, opportunities for parents to discuss their child's accomplishments.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Children's personal, social and emotional development, communication skills, physical development and knowledge and understanding of the world are wide ranging but broadly typical for the age group. The good range of activities on offer promotes physical and mental activity well. In the main, children make good progress because staff make learning fun and use questioning effectively to help children think and develop their vocabulary. They promote a love of books and stories very effectively by allowing children to choose and take home high quality books each day to share with their families and discuss with staff. The use of the school grounds for activities such as the close observation of growing plants, together with the good range of recently improved resources, supports children's learning well. Children make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development because they have plenty of opportunities to make choices, are guided sensitively and always encouraged to 'have a go' and be independent. Staff make detailed observations while children are undertaking particular tasks. Currently, however, planning for the next steps in children's learning is not based precisely enough on these observations. Consequently, some activities do not always promote the best possible progress by building systematically on what children already know, understand and can do.

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?	2
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?	2
How well are children helped to enjoy and achieve?	2
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

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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