

Acorns

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	510074
Inspection date	12/06/2009
Inspector	Jeffery Plumb
Setting address	Churcham Primary School, Churcham, Gloucestershire, GL2 8BD
Telephone number	01452 750467
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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).

Children only attend this setting before and/or after the school day and/or during the school holidays. The judgements in this report reflect the quality of early years provision offered to children during those periods.

Description of the setting

Acorns opened in 1996. It operates from a room in Churcham Primary School. There is disabled access to the classroom via a ramp and the toilet has a wide door enabling access for wheelchair users. The group serves the village and surrounding rural area. It is run by a voluntary committee of parents.

The setting is on the Early Years Register to care for no more than nine children from two-years to the end of the early years age group. There are currently 14 children from two-years to four-years-old on roll. This includes four funded three-year-olds and five funded four-year-olds. The group can support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. There are no children currently attending who speak English as an additional language.

The group opens five days a week during school term-times. Sessions are on Monday to Friday from 09:30 until 12:15. Two staff members work with the children. The leader is a qualified primary school teacher, who also has a recognised qualification in early years. There is a close partnership with the Early Years Foundation Stage class in the primary school on the same site as the setting and the headteacher of this primary school is on the management committee. The setting is a member of and receives support from Gloucester's Playgroup and Toddler Association.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Acorns Pre-School makes outstanding provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and meets their needs exceptionally well. It is fully inclusive of all children. The provision very significantly supports and develops children with speech and language difficulties. The learning for all children is enhanced through a wide range of challenging and fun activities. The capacity for further improvement is outstanding.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- enable children to have more opportunities to develop their writing skills outdoors
- improve free-flow access to the outdoor play areas

The leadership and management of the early years provision

Very effective policies and management systems are in place to ensure that children are secure and safe. The outdoor play area is checked before the start of each session and broken sticks and any fox mess are removed. The sand pit is

cleaned daily and the water tray is regularly disinfected. Toys are washed regularly and any broken ones thrown away. Child protection procedures met government regulations at the time of the inspection and a committee member has undertaken safe recruitment training. All staff are appropriately first aid trained.

Outstanding self-evaluation enables the centre manager to take decisive action which benefits the children very significantly. All staff members have contributed to the use of the Ofsted self-evaluation tool and the setting has clear and agreed targets for improvement. For example, very effective evaluation has resulted in a much improved book sharing scheme between the pre-school and children's homes. It has also enhanced the organisation of the space available to improve and accelerate children's learning.

There is an excellent partnership with parents. Parents value the open door policy and a significant number are involved as helpers on a regular basis. Staff members are diligent in finding out from parents what their children are interested in and enjoy doing at home. They then use this information in their planning to accelerate the children's learning. Parents receive regular and frequent feedback about how their children are doing and receive formal end-of-year reports. The first transition meeting for parents of children moving into the Early Years Foundation Stage within the on-site primary school is carefully planned and each parent/carer is seen individually.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Children, including those with language delay, make very good progress in all the areas of learning and achieve outstandingly well. They learn through challenging and exciting activities, which are matched exceptionally well to their needs and interests. As a result, children really enjoy their learning, feel very safe and contribute fully in all activities. For example, a key worker discovers that a child is fascinated by eyes on an animal in a story book and captures his interest and develops his language well through a topic on body parts. Through this project all the children enjoy singing rhyming songs as they learn the names of their body parts. Assessment is used outstandingly well to inform the next steps of development and learning for the children. For example, observing that a child, who finds it difficult to settle first thing in the morning, is fascinated with toy trains his key worker puts out train engines for him to play with on arrival; he soon settles. The key worker of a child about to start school observed that she writes her own name independently with a high degree of accuracy and forms her letters quite well, but struggles with forming the letter 'a' in her name. She spent time with the child's mother demonstrating how to use a pencil to help her child to form the letter 'a'. The mother practised with her child at home and now the child confidently forms her letter 'a' beautifully.

The provision for children's welfare is outstanding. Children develop an excellent understanding of health and safety. They help prepare healthy snacks which they enjoy every day and use trikes and bikes outside to make their hearts pump. They put their sun hats on when going out in the sun and wash their hands after using the toilet without being prompted. The outdoor play area is exciting, but children

do not always have free-flow access to it because at times it is shared with the children who attend the primary school and they cannot climb on the apparatus at the same time as older children. Resources outdoors for developing children's mathematical skills are better than those for developing their language and writing skills. Overall, children's number skills are very good. One with a twinkle in her eyes, looks at a measuring tape and says, 'You are 72', focussing her look at the 72 mark on the tape. Children's life skills are very good and developed through fun activities, such as pretending to answer a telephone in an imaginary office and jot down messages on a notepad. Computers are used for number and language games. Through celebrating religious festivals their awareness of cultural diversity is successfully heightened. Children collect used postage stamps to raise funds for guide dogs for the blind and at an appropriate level of understanding grasp what they are doing and the reason why. By the time they leave children are extremely well-prepared for the next stage of their learning.

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

Leadership and management

How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	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

How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?	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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