

Widcombe Acorns Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector	Susan Esther Harvey

Setting address	St Marks Community Centre, St Marks Road, Widcombe, Bath, BA2 4PA
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Type of setting	Childcare on non-domestic premises

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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*.

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Description of the setting

Widcombe Acorns Pre-school opened in 1989. It operates from St. Mark's Community Church Hall with access to separate and main hall. Children have access to an enclosed garden. The pre-school is situated in the Widcombe area of Bath. It is open each weekday from Monday to Friday 09.30 to 15.30.

The pre-school is registered on the Early Years Register. A maximum of 25 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. There are currently 60 children from two to under five years on roll, some in part time places. The pre-school supports children with additional needs.

There are seven members of staff, four of whom hold early years qualifications to NVQ3.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

Children are inspired to learn. Staff work exceptionally well together as a team with complimentary skills which they use to enable children to achieve successfully. They are inclusive in their practice as all children are provided with high quality care and attention. There is an excellent partnership with parents, other settings and professionals involved in the children's care. This contributes significantly to the high standards achieved. The pre-school shows an outstanding capacity to maintain continuous improvement, as all staff are totally committed to constantly improving outcomes for children and there are highly effective strategies in place to do so.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- consider consolidating all information around self-evaluation of the setting in order for staff and committee to gain an immediate picture of areas for improvement

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The staff and child protection officer are abundantly aware of the responsibility they have in the safeguarding of children in their care. The child protection officer is proactive in regularly updating her knowledge with regard to child protection by attending training courses. This means that up-to-date information about current legislation is fully understood. All staff are extremely aware of their responsibility to follow the correct procedure in the event of a concern about a child. There is a

highly effective system in place to ensure that children are cared for by people who are suitable to work with children regarding the employment of staff and protecting children from people who are not vetted. There is a risk assessment and robust system in place, which includes a detailed induction process for new staff and students and areas to be checked each day in order to keep children safe.

The pre-schools' success in implementing the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) results, very effectively, from the excellent leadership within the team of staff members and their aim to provide inspiring high quality care and learning opportunities for all children. The parent committee has a very clear vision of improvements through the employment of qualified and experienced staff who are passionate about the quality of learning for all children in their care. The supervisor of the pre-school draws on all available resources to improve outcomes for children, including those with additional needs. Resources include support from the local authority inclusions advisor and other professionals who may be involved in the children's welfare. As a result, working closely with parents and professionals enables staff to successfully meet the welfare requirements of all children and narrow their achievement gap. These wider partnerships along with the excellent partnership with parents, contribute substantially to improving children's progress and care in the EYFS. A strong partnership with the local school is fully effective and supports the smooth transition from pre-school to school for every child.

Highly successful and comprehensive systems are in place for reviewing the pre-school practice. Children, parents and staff, are meaningfully involved in the review, but the information is not consolidated in order for staff and committee to gain an immediate picture of areas for improvement. However, staff and committee have a clear vision for the future of the pre-school, and all involved in the setting are asked to contribute their views. For example, staff take time for weekly reflections with the children and record their comments. Children frequently take part in looking at what they would like in the pre-school and have contributed significantly to the design and content of an indoor wooden den, which can be altered into whatever they wish it to be, by staff interchanging the panels. Involvement in such a process successfully contributes to the enjoyment of working within a highly inclusive setting where everyone's views are valued. The pre-school very much promotes ethos of children learning through their own experience and play, and being given the resources and tools to do this. As a result, children's time in the pre-school is one of pleasure and excitement, promoted by a combination of enthusiastic staff and supportive parent committee.

The quality and standards of the early years provision and outcomes for children

Children in the pre-school, including those with additional needs, delight in their exploratory play and achieve exceptionally well. This stems from the excellent systems of observation, assessment, planning and evaluation led by staff members who harmoniously work together as a team and fully demonstrate an excellent understanding of the early learning goals. The highly qualified and skilled staff are committed to ongoing training and attend courses which greatly enhances children's ability to learn through play. Since the implementation of the EYFS staff

have worked together to organise a highly effective key person system. This provides a firm platform for close relationships between children, parents and staff from which high standards in learning and development emerge. Home visits take place to ensure that a solid link is well established between children's home and pre-school before they start. This has an extremely beneficial effect on all children, especially those with additional needs. Through close discussion and communication each day, staff are able to identify a child's interest immediately and follow it through the next time the child attends. All children learn to 'sign' straight away when starting in the pre-school, so have a common language. Staff are able to make story telling fun as they introduce the common sign for pigs and ducks when reading the story of 'The pig in the pond'. Story telling plays an important part in the work of the staff in the pre-school, they are part of an international project which associates story telling with children's ability to form letters and words as the basis for reading and writing, which is an integral part in helping children's progress into school. The outcomes for children are that their ability to learn extremely well is maintained through lots of fun and play.

Each key person in the pre-school knows their group of children extremely well, they acknowledge each child as an individual with particular needs, staff then use this knowledge to identify what children need to learn next. Staff interact with the children on all levels and there is a very effective balance between adult led activities and child-initiated interests. Children's starting points are established on entry into the pre-school in cooperation with parents and through detailed written observations. Children's progress is tracked, shared with parents and monitored against the early learning goals. Children delight in choosing their experiences, deciding whether to play indoors or outside. They are well on their way to being independent learners and develop useful skills for the future. The rooms are set up to promote this, as children have access to low level shelves, dressing up clothes, painting and craft resources, books where they can sit in comfort on large colourful, soft cushions and boxes of construction resources to suit all children.

Staff training is in abundance, they are highly committed to increasing their learning which has a clear impact on the children's ability to learn. For example, a recent training event on how Forest schools utilize their outside play inspired staff to further extend children's learning outside in the garden. A grandparent designed and sculpted from wood, a three sided structure which housed a story seat, where a child can sit and tell stories to groups of children and staff sitting on logs as part of the audience, they are excited at the chance to tell stories from their imagination. Staff transfer the stories into a written collection which is made into a book for re-telling to parents and the children. Further learning outside in the garden includes planting seeds to grow vegetables and plants, taking risks climbing over logs, learning boundaries where not to go in the garden, exploring the soil for insects and looking under logs for worms, which are then carried to the compost heap. Hide and seek is a favourite game as children hide among the trees and bushes safely.

Children's health and safety are promoted exceedingly well. They learn the basics of healthy living through regular routines, they promptly wash their hands after being in the garden, they readily use soap and water after hand painting and independently access the bathroom. Daily exercise takes place outside and

indoors. Children delight in combating an obstacle course set out in the main hall, they very quickly gain confidence in walking along a beam and following instructions from staff in order to travel around the course and succeed. Snack time is a focus of the morning and afternoon as it gives children the opportunity for individual contact with the staff and also to sit with peers to talk about the activities they have enjoyed. Fresh fruit and interesting accompaniments such as sunflower seeds are a favourite snack with many children.

Children use exceptionally safe and secure environments both indoors and out. Staff teach children how to keep themselves safe, particularly in the garden when they are fully aware of the boundaries of where to play. Staff members are very knowledgeable and understand their responsibilities for safeguarding children's welfare, they know the procedures to follow immediately if they have any concerns about a child. Overall, the eagerness and stamina of the staff to provide high quality care and learning, ensures that children have a happy and challenging time in their care.

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

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	1

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	1
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding	1
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	1
The effectiveness of partnerships	1
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	1

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	1
The extent to which children feel safe	1
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	1
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	1

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