

# Acorn Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

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**Unique reference number** EY339290  
**Inspection date** 20/11/2009  
**Inspector** Fiona Robinson

**Setting address** Acorn Centre, Grange Primary School, Homleigh Road,  
Tuffley, Gloucester, GL4 0RN

**Telephone number** 01452523102

**Email**

**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*.

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.

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## **Description of the setting**

The Acorn Centre operates from a self-contained unit within Grange Primary School. There is ramped disability access to the setting. The school is situated in a residential area, on the outskirts of the city of Gloucester. Children attend mainly from the Podsmead and Tuffley areas, with a few coming from further away. The group is registered for 42 children aged two to eight years. There are 71 children on roll, of whom 56 children are funded.

The setting is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. It was first registered in August 1993.

The group supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and children who speak English as an additional language. Sessions run daily between 9:00am and 3:00pm. Children can attend for a session or for the whole day. A cooked meal or packed lunch can be provided by the school canteen. Children have access to two playrooms, toilets, children's kitchen and an entrance hall. The group has its own outdoor play area, this area includes grassed and hard standing surfaces. Eight members of staff work in the group. They all hold level 3 National Vocational Qualifications in Childcare, two hold level 4.

## **The overall effectiveness of the early years provision**

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children enjoy coming to the setting and are fully included in a broad range of activities. Staff are good at promoting the children's welfare and work hard to meet their individual needs. Staff have good links with parents, the Children's Centre and the host school within an atmosphere of strong community spirit. Children respond well to the care and support they are given. Managers and staff are keen to improve the quality of care and learning provided and demonstrate a good capacity to improve in the future.

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

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

- develop the children's fine and gross motor skills in all activities
- develop the outdoor environment, including resources.

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

Children's safety is protected well, because staff have a good knowledge of safeguarding procedures and work hard to keep them safe. Children are well supervised when using the outside area and use a range of equipment that is safe and suitable for their age. Comprehensive policies and procedures are fully

implemented to ensure children are kept safe. Risk assessments are conducted regularly to minimise danger. There are robust systems in place for staff recruitment and vetting, and there are rigorous procedures for parents to follow when collecting their children.

Partnership with parents is good and they are warmly welcomed every day to discuss their children's achievements. Parents say staff are helpful, caring and approachable and their children enjoy attending the setting. Staff invite parents to attend a 'stay and chat' session on a fortnightly basis. They share the children's journey books with them and keep them well informed of their children's progress. Parents are kept fully informed of special events through comprehensive newsletters, informal discussions and the notice board. The relationships with the Children's Centre and the host school are good and the setting benefits from the use of the outdoor environment and allotment area. There are strong links with the community and information is shared effectively with outside agencies.

The setting is well led and managed with a keen focus on driving improvement. Good self-evaluation systems ensure that the views of parents and children are taken into consideration. Staff are well deployed and effective use is made of resources to meet the children's needs. Staff plan together and practice is continually evaluated through appraisals and regular staff meetings. They demonstrate a good idea of their strengths and areas for development. They regularly access appropriate training opportunities and actively promote equality and diversity. Children achieve well and are fully integrated into pre-school life. Good progress has been made in addressing the recommendations of the previous inspection. In particular, staff have improved the resources and organisation of the indoor area of learning. The key person system has been introduced and monitoring and evaluation systems have developed well. Staff work well as a team and extra care and sensitivity is shown towards children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The manager and staff have appropriately identified the need to further develop the outdoor environment to maximise play opportunities. Also, they are introducing more activities to develop children's fine and gross motor skills.

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

Children have valuable opportunities to learn and benefit from being cared for in a well organised, inclusive environment. A strong emphasis is placed on the value of play and children are happily involved in activities. Key staff complete activity plans based on the children's strengths, interests and areas of development. Staff carefully monitor and record children's achievements. This information is used well to inform future learning.

Children are developing an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves healthy. They are encouraged to make healthy choices at snack time from a wide selection of fruit and independently access their own drinks. They grow their own fruit and vegetables in a nearby allotment and enjoy making fruit salads and soups out of their own produce. They receive excellent guidance from a member of the

community and learn about healthy lifestyles and foods that are good for them. They realise the importance of exercise and enjoy their daily 'Wake and Shake' sessions. They move actively outdoors using wheeled toys and bikes and enjoy crawling through tunnels and balancing on the climbing frames. Their safety is promoted well and they learn how to use equipment safely as they make junk models and create colourful collages. They enjoy informative visits and safety talks from fire and police officers. Festivals such as Diwali and the Chinese New Year enrich their experiences. Staff have clear expectations of behaviour and are very good role models. Children develop good relationships with staff and other children. They behave well and share resources sensibly, such as the computer and interactive whiteboard. They enjoy fundraising activities and their independent skills are developed well.

Children enjoy being creative and blow through straws making pictures out of the bubbles. They like to role play in their house and shop areas and are keen to investigate various construction materials. They check how tall they are on the height chart and create glittering pictures of fireworks. Personal development, creative and language skills are promoted well, with good interaction from the staff. Children enjoy listening to familiar stories such as 'We're Going on a Bear Hunt' and join in with the endings. They learn about numbers and identify shapes such as circles, squares and triangles in their environment. They are confident to complete simple computer programs and use their imaginations well as they paint pictures to music. Staff have identified the need to further develop their fine and gross motor skills indoors and outdoors and have increased these activities. Children enjoy making music, mark making in shaving foam, flying their scarves and kites in the wind and rolling balls down drainpipes. Overall, children are encouraged to be independent and they are prepared well for their next stage in 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*

### The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

<b>How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?</b>	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	2

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

<b>How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?</b>	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	2
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding	2
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	2
The effectiveness of partnerships	2
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	2

### The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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### Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

<b>Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	2
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	2
The extent to which children feel safe	2
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	2
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	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