

# Acorns Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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**Inspection date** 03/03/2010  
**Inspector** Angela Rowley

**Setting address** Acorns Childrens Centre, Lostock Lane, Lostock, BOLTON,  
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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

Acorns Day Nursery was registered in 2009 and is located on a business park in the Lostock area of Bolton, close to a large retail park, train station and motorway network. It is one of 24 nurseries owned by Treetops Nurseries Limited: a national chain of nurseries providing childcare throughout the country. It operates from the ground floor of a converted leisure centre which has been refurbished to provide four designated home base areas, a dining room and reception area. The children have access to enclosed outdoor play areas.

The nursery is open each weekday from 7am to 6pm, all year round, except for bank holidays and Christmas week. It is registered on the Early Years Register to care for a maximum of 78 children at any one time. There are currently 66 children on roll, some in part-time places. At present, the nursery cares for a small number of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The setting provides funded early education for three- and four-year-olds.

There are 11 members of staff working directly with the children, six of whom hold recognised early years qualifications and two of whom are working towards a qualification. The nursery also has four relief staff and a designated cook. The nursery receives support from Bolton early years.

## The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is satisfactory.

Since the registration of the nursery only a short time ago, some considerable progress has been made in developing the provision for the children. Along with the next phase of plans for further developments, this demonstrates the nursery's strong capacity to maintain continuous improvement. Good communication has formed the basis for many strong relationships with parents, which along with the partnerships that the setting has developed with other agencies, ensures children's individual needs are met. Staff's sound and developing knowledge of the Early Years Foundation Stage ensures children are happy and make suitable progress in their learning. Mostly effective organisation of the provision ensures that the children's welfare is suitably promoted and all requirements are met.

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

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

- review staffing arrangements, particularly staff shifts, to ensure they are organised to provide consistency and to meet the individual needs of children
- improve risk assessment procedures, particularly the daily checking of play areas and ensure all areas accessed by children are safe and suitable before use
- continue to implement and develop staff's understanding of the systems to

support individualised learning; securing the use of systematic observation and assessments of what children can do, to identify learning priorities which help children make progress towards the early learning goals in all areas of learning

- improve the educational programme in relation to the area of knowledge and understanding of the world and continue to develop the outside learning environment to support this.

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

Sound recruitment and vetting procedures ensure that adults working with children are suitable to do so. Comprehensive procedures in relation to child protection are in place and through some in-house training staff have a clear understanding of the next steps to take if they have concerns about a child's welfare. The setting's child protection policy is regularly reviewed; for example, strict controls have recently been put in place in relation to the use of camera phones in the setting. In almost all areas of the nursery, risk assessments are effective and result in a safe environment for children. As part of their phased improvements to the provision the majority of children's base areas have been fully refurbished creating a clean, well maintained and stimulating environment. However, work to the premises has resulted in some disorganisation to the outside play area and the room being used for meal times; staff do not consistently check and ensure these areas are suitable before use, which means there are some potential hazards to children. The nursery has a clear operational plan and keeps all records required for the safe and efficient management of the provision for children. These include some comprehensive procedures to promote and maintain the children's good health.

Suitable systems are in place to plan the numbers of staff required to meet at least minimum ratios. This ensures that children are suitably supported, although their consistent care is hindered at times, for example, when managers are included in ratios to cover shifts and are needed to undertake other duties. Management have already begun recruiting additional staff to provide better support when needed. Staff training has been suitably prioritised in line with identified areas for development and the setting is working closely with the local support team to provide further training and development opportunities for staff. Good quality toys and equipment are provided in all rooms, and further improvements are continually being made. Resources effectively support the children's learning in most areas, although there are weaknesses in the provision for outside play and physical development, children's knowledge and understanding of the world and their awareness of social and cultural diversity. The nursery welcomes all children and families. The nursery values and works closely with other professionals, which ensures that children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported.

Partnerships with parents are prioritised and by establishing good relationships staff ensure children's individual needs are met. Right from the start a secure gradual admission process supports the transition from home and builds a clear sense of trust. These effective transitions are continued in the children's

progression through the nursery. An abundance of information displays are attractively presented throughout the setting. This, along with daily diary sheets and communication folders, keeps parents well informed about the nursery and children's activities. Through parents evenings, information is shared regarding the children's progress and plans for future learning, although there is no continuous means of parents contributing to these. Parents speak very positively with regard to the improvements made to the provision for their children and have been asked to contribute their ideas for the development of the outside play area.

The nursery has made good progress since registration and continues to develop the provision. They are at the end of the first phase of planned improvements and have a clear well-targeted plan for the implementation of the second; for example, they have secured funding to refurbish and redesign the outside play area. The management evaluate the process of improvements and their self-evaluation is largely accurate. Along with the staff team, they know how far they have come and are clear about the areas they are still developing. They have a keen drive to secure their future plans and further develop the provision for children.

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

Overall, staff have a sound and developing understanding of the systems in place to help children progress. They make observations of what children are interested in and what they can do and from this they plan relevant experiences which promotes their learning. As a result, the children are well occupied and enjoy their play. However, they do not always make as much progress as they could because the observations and assessments of what they can do are not always used to their best effect. Plans for individual children's next steps are sometimes too narrow and the planning of additional activities and experiences is not consistently monitored at present to ensure a balanced range of learning opportunities are provided.

The children are becoming active, independent learners because toys and equipment are mostly well organised to provide an enabling environment. The continuous play provision reflects all areas of learning; although, opportunities for exploring and investigating the outside world and some aspects of physical development are limited at present. Staff are developing their understanding of how to provide a stimulating environment for babies. As a result babies have new opportunities to explore some interesting areas, such as a black and white contrasting themed area. Through the provision of a good range of natural materials such as hay, shaving foam, custard, and jelly, they respond to what they see, smell, touch and feel. All children are enabled to follow their individual interests. Staff know when to intervene and direct children's learning, thus providing suitable challenge; for example, they quickly provide additional resources in response to the children's interest in cutting out and making marks on paper. This extends their interest further and sustains their concentration. Staff observe which children can use the scissors confidently and target their support to others, enabling all children to participate together.

The children are developing the skills they need for the future. They show a keen interest in numeracy as they count and use number naturally and meaningfully in their play. All around the setting they see number in print. They also use mathematical language associated with shape and size. The children show an interest in books and stories. They enjoy sitting in the cosy areas which enable them to relax with an adult and look at books in comfort. They use a range of mark-making tools, and more able children draw recognisable images and ascribe meaning to their marks. Some children also show an interest in sounds and letters. Resources are available throughout the nursery which help children develop their skills in the use of information and communication technology. A small range of books and resources depict positive images of diversity; although, with the exception of some interesting fund raising events, there are few planned and meaningful opportunities to help raise the children's awareness of the wider world.

The children feel safe and develop confidence in the setting due to the close relationships they have with their carers. The nurturing, caring relationships that children develop with their key people help them become confident individuals who form close relationships with their friends. The children develop a clear sense of belonging in the setting and their self-esteem is promoted often; for example, when they see photographs displayed of themselves and their special people or pets. Through clear boundaries they know what is expected of them and behave appropriately. Staff are increasing their expectations of the children and are beginning to encourage them to take more responsibility for themselves; for example, self-service meal times have recently been introduced for the oldest children in the nursery. The children are sometimes enabled to access bathroom facilities and go outside independently, though this is inconsistent. They have a good understanding of health care routines and have secure foundations for developing a healthy lifestyle. The children are well nourished and freely access drinking water when thirsty. They keep themselves clean and wipe their own noses when needed. The children enjoy outside play each day and some children are taken for weekly swimming lessons or for visits into the adjoining soft play centre, which extends their physical play opportunities.

## 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>	3
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>	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	3
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding	3
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

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
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### Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

<b>Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	3
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	3
The extent to which children feel safe	3
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	3
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	3

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