

The Acorn Children's Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	EY270525
Inspection date	03/02/2011
Inspector	Becky Johnson
Setting address	RAF Cosford, Albrighton, Wolverhampton, West Midlands, WV7 3EX
Telephone number	01902 377221
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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

Acorn Childcare Centre was registered in 2003. The setting operates from eight rooms in a purpose built, single storey building in the grounds of the RAF Cosford airbase, near Albrighton in Shropshire. Children have access to a fully enclosed garden for outdoor play. The setting supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those for whom English is an additional language.

The nursery mainly serves RAF personnel but children from the surrounding areas may also attend. The setting is open Monday to Friday from 7.45am until 5.15pm. The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register to care for a maximum of 100 children. There are currently 76 children on roll who attend for a variety of sessions.

There are currently 22 members of staff working with the children of whom 18 are qualified to NVQ Level 3. One member of staff has Early Years Professional Status and the manager has NVQ Level 4. The setting receives support from the local authority.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

The setting is a wonderful, lively and vibrant place for children where they are very well cared for, valued and made to feel special. Children experience a wide range of exciting and stimulating activities which capture their imagination and ensure that they make excellent progress in their learning and development. The setting is proactive in fostering very good partnerships with parents and outside agencies to ensure that the individual needs of all the children are very well met. The committee of the setting is totally supportive and involved in the day-to-day running of the setting. There is a clear vision for the future and systems are in place to continually evaluate the setting to ensure that continuous improvement is sustained.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- developing further the use of outdoors for planting and growing to enhance children's learning experiences.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Staff are extremely diligent in child protection matters and their in-depth knowledge and understanding of safeguarding policies and procedures ensures that children are fully safeguarded. Procedures for vetting and assessing the suitability of staff are stringently implemented. The premises are warm and inviting. Photographs of children taking part in activities and displays that they have made are exhibited throughout the setting and give children a sense of belonging. Children are safe in the setting and are able to move freely between areas due to in-depth risk assessments and vigilant staff who clearly explain to children how to play safely. In-depth documentation enhances the excellent practice and ensures the safe and efficient management of the provision.

Staff are highly motivated and enthusiastic about the service they provide. They are well qualified and regularly attend additional training to further their knowledge and expertise. The committee, manager and staff are totally committed to continuous improvement and the capacity for this is excellent. They work closely together to find and implement systems to develop the provision and provide the best possible outcomes for the children who attend.

Parents are seen as an integral part of the setting and staff work very closely and effectively with them to ensure that children's needs are fully met. In-depth information regarding children's routines and care needs develops consistency between home and the setting and helps new children to settle well. Parents are welcomed into the setting and their expertise is valued. For example, parents from other cultures are invited to share clothes and artefacts which relate to their culture or religion to broaden children's understanding of the wider world. Parents are actively involved in their children's learning. Planning is displayed and staff share information on a daily basis about activities that children have taken part in. Parents are encouraged to attend 'stay and play' sessions where they can experience first hand the activities and see how children learn from them. A wide range of additional information, such as, infection control and tips on behaviour management and weaning are displayed to provide parents with additional support. Close working relationships with other settings and professionals have been developed in order to maintain a consistent approach in meeting children's needs. Staff have forged good relationships with the local school to ensure that the transition from nursery to school is a positive experience for the children.

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

Children are encouraged to be active learners and are excited and motivated to take part in the innovative and stimulating activities provided for them. For example, they eagerly participate in a music session where they play a variety of African instruments and talk about the sounds they make such as rattle and shake. In-depth planning develops from children's choices and staff are confident in allowing activities to evolve at the children's own pace. For example, a wonderful

food tasting session evolved from a child's comment that some foods are tasty. As a result, children thoroughly enjoy tasting a variety of fruits including, sharon fruit, pomegranate, mango and blueberries, using their skills to cut the fruits and then describing how they taste and feel. Observations are used to identify the next steps of children's learning and ensure that children make progress in line with their starting points and capabilities.

The nursery is totally child-orientated and staff strive to ensure that children have fun and enjoy all aspects of their time in the setting. Babies show obvious delight as they explore the equipment in the sensory room and show wonder and awe as they watch the fish in the bubble tube and the colours change on a disco ball. Children's imagination is fostered as the role play area is transformed into exciting places such as, an icecream parlour, a veterinary surgery, a Chinese restaurant and a recycling centre. The role play area is also expertly used by staff to help children to cope with changes in their lives. For example, when a new sibling arrives it is changed into a baby clinic. Children use imaginative and expressive language during their play as they pretend to run away from the monster under the leaves who breathes fire.

Outdoors is used as an extension to learning. Children enjoy free flow to a wonderful outside area enhanced by windchimes, windmills, pots, pans and wooden spoons attached to the fencing for the children to watch and play with. Children's physical skills are further developed as they run over and under the bridge in the garden and use equipment such as bikes and cars. However, opportunities for children to develop their knowledge of sustainability through planting and growing are yet to be developed fully. Children with additional needs are fully included into the setting and procedures have been implemented to ensure that all children's individual needs are fully recognised and met. Children's knowledge of the wider world is developed through activities and resources and a wide range of positive images are displayed throughout the setting. They visit the local community where they enjoy train rides and trips to the park and visits from the Community Police, Ambulance and Fire Service brings the local community to the setting.

Children receive a balanced diet as they thoroughly enjoy a wonderful range of healthy home cooked meals which include favourites, such as stew, toad in the hole, fruit crumble and rice pudding. The cook is very experienced and fully understands children's dietary requirements as well as their likes and dislikes. She changes menus to match the seasons and is always looking for new and exciting recipes for children to enjoy. The setting has received a 5 star award for food hygiene. Parents regularly ask for the recipes and as a result, the cook has now prepared a recipe book to enable them to prepare children's favourite meals at home. Mealtimes are lovely, social occasions where staff and children sit together happily chatting about their day.

Children learn to behave in an appropriate way and staff have high expectations to develop and support this. They act as positive role models as they foster children's self esteem and offer praise and encouragement at all times. Children learn good manners as they say please and thank you appropriately, learn to share toys and to take turns. Any concerns regarding behaviour are discussed with parents and

staff work closely with them to develop strategies and find solutions. Children understand the importance of following simple hygiene routines, such as, washing their hands before eating or after 'messy play'. Younger children are further protected from the risk of infection as nappy changing routines are stringently applied and every child has their own individual bedding. Children learn to keep themselves safe as they use equipment such as scissors safely, practice evacuation procedures and learn about road safety when they go into the local community. The support and care they receive from staff and the bonds they are forming with them enable children to feel secure and safe in their environment. Above all, children have fun. Children's enjoyment at being in the setting is evident as laughter and excitement reverberate throughout the building.

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

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	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

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
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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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