

# Acorns Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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**Unique reference number** 126962  
**Inspection date** 28/02/2011  
**Inspector** Linda Coccia

**Setting address** Acorns Nursery/Sevenoaks Primary School, Bradbourne  
Park Road, Sevenoaks, Kent, TN13 3LB  
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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 opened in 1990. The Nursery is managed by Company Child Care Ltd. The nursery is in a single storey building on the site of Sevenoaks Primary School in Bradbourne, Kent. The nursery has access to four main areas for play, a bathroom, kitchen, office, staff room and secure garden. There is suitable/restricted access to the building. It serves families from the local community and surrounding area.

The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register. There are currently 60 children aged from eleven months to four years, five months on roll. All children fall within the early year's age range. Children aged three and four years receive funding for nursery education. The nursery opens five days a week, from 8.00am until 6.00pm, for 51 weeks of the year. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting has procedures in place to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language.

There are 15 members of staff who work directly with the children. They all hold a recognised early years qualification to National Vocation Qualification level two or above. The manager holds a Foundation Degree, BH (Hons) in Early Years. A cook is employed to cater for children's dietary needs. The nursery gains support through the parent's committee and the management company.

## The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

The nursery provides good quality care for children. It provides an outstanding range of toys and activities for children to help them learn and develop. Overall, the nursery is meeting the needs of the children very well. The manager has addressed recommendations from the nursery's previous inspection to provide more images of numbers and shapes and images of equality and diversity in the play rooms. This shows she is able to maintain continuous improvement within the nursery setting.

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

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

- share information about children's learning and development and any other relevant information with other setting practitioners' when children attend several settings
- improve processes to enable parents to comment regularly in their children's development record.

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

The manager and her deputy are both very organised. They continually consult each other about issues that may affect the smooth running of the nursery. For example, maintaining staffing ratios when staff are absent for training. The good range of safeguarding procedures is well maintained and all staff are aware of internal procedures for reporting concerns. Staff all hold current Criminal Record Bureau checks. The nursery's recruitment and vetting procedures are rigorous and robust and a new staff induction process spanning over a week ensures staff know procedures well enough to be able to maintain the good levels of care and safety. All regulatory paperwork such as the children's individual accident and medication records are well maintained. The Health and Safety officer carries out risk assessments on all toys and activities and includes all the necessary information required. By maintaining the regulatory requirements the staff ensure that children's well being is promoted and children are suitably safeguarded. The manager has carried out a good evaluation of the nursery's service. She has included the views of staff and parents. As a result she has been able to draw up an action plan for areas for improvement. These include improvements to the building as well as improvements in the arrangements of the rooms which will enhance the provision of the activities for the children. Stage one, a new floor in the main room, has just been completed. Stage two, to combine two areas into one is about to commence. This will involve lots of new practice procedures for staff and the children will be able to experience a wider range of static activities, such as a designated role play area. This means that the children will have more effective use of the good resources available to them.

All children are welcome at the setting. The nursery has good procedures in place to ensure that staff are aware of equality and diversity issues and practice inclusion. The nursery has a qualified Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator. She is able to assess children and can access additional services to help their learning and development. The manager and her curriculum co-ordinator have studied the learning needs of boys. As a result, all staff are able to talk about the changes they have made in order to meet those needs. They acknowledge the positive impact the changes have had on the boys by allowing them to construct dens and camps. Also, the practice of staff standing back more has allowed boys to explore activities instead of having things explained. Children are using their problem solving and reasoning skills much more. The nursery has good links with the local primary schools that their children will ultimately attend. The staff attend cluster meetings which allow them to talk to teachers about the children during their transition to school period. However, no links have been forged with other sessional or full day care provisions that children attend. This means that children's individual progress may not be being sustained. The key-workers do work well with other carers, such as grandparents and childminders who collect children from the nursery. The required exchanges of information about children are being maintained in these instances. Parents report that they are very happy with the service being provided. They are happy to recommend the nursery to other parents. They receive lots of written information in the parent information booklet, regular informative newsletters and swap information with keyworkers daily about their children.

However, they do not have regular opportunities to make written comments in their children's progress records. Overall, children are receiving good consistent care because regular discussions about their individual needs take place.

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

Children and parents are welcomed warmly onto the premises. They are eager to attend and want to rush off and play. The babies are calm and settled. Due to extended maternity leave the nursery generally starts children from about eight months. Staff have amended the settling in process which now extends over a week with parents participating more and children are able to experience most aspects of nursery care before parents leave them full time. The aspects of care include bottle feeding, nappy changing, and such like, by staff instead of parents. Staff report that this has had a very positive effect on the children and they separate from parents more easily. Most of the babies and toddler aged children are not phased by visitors. They show initial interest but continue to play. This shows that they feel safe in the setting.

The children experience an excellent range of interesting activities. For example, the older children recently rescued a toy action figure from a tree in the garden. A staff member had stranded the figure quite high in the tree. The children spent a lot of time considering how they could rescue it. They used a thought board where their comments were recorded from 'we could fly' or 'get a helicopter' to 'we need a ladder'. They then considered the suggestions to see which of them they could use and what equipment they had to hand. Eventually the action figure was rescued with a long stick which the children had to work together to manoeuvre. Afterwards they recorded what they had done in their artworks which are now being displayed. This one activity uses a number of areas of learning but particularly helped to develop children's problem solving and reasoning skills. All the children enjoy different types of music. In the babies room the music tends to be calming. In the toddler room the music tends to be more traditional and helps the children to recognise nursery rhymes and their favourite tunes. The older children enjoy a wider variety of music from rigorous orchestral pieces to well known film theme tunes. A music teacher regularly visits and some staff play musical instruments. Babies and toddlers enjoy treasure baskets and engage in heuristic play. They are also proficient in baby signing and make their needs known to staff. They can ably indicate when they want more food or a drink. Children use interesting computer programmes which they ably operate for themselves. Staff recognise the importance of male role models and regularly enrol Dad's to spend time with the children. Dad's usually come prepared with activities. For example, one father brought in batteries and electrical components for the children to explore. By investigating the components the children achieved the goal of making the robot's eyes light up. The children have excellent opportunities for physical play. Soft blocks are available for all ages throughout the nursery. Wooden steps are used to help children increase their confidence in walking upstairs. The outdoor physical play includes a rope swing, various climbing frames and the general plethora of small equipment. There is a huge earth pit for digging.

Children build their own hides and dens from the large construction bricks. During the snowy weather the children constructed an exceptional snow house from moulded snow bricks. Photographs were taken and included in that term's newsletter which gave children a further talking point about what they achieved. Children are developing excellent skills for the future. Children are observed while they play. Staff keep excellent learning journey records for each child. Each record includes information for parents about children's learning patterns, explanations about children's well being and involvement and a chart which plots the progress being made. Many include some memorable assessments of individual children making excellent progress in their areas of learning. Each child's next steps are clearly identified and are used to compile the excellent activity planning sheets. All children are catered for as individuals. Records clearly show that children are making outstanding progress towards the Early Learning Goals.

The children are involved in planting seeds and tending to growing plants in the vegetable patch in the garden. They harvest the resulting vegetables which are cooked on the premises and eaten by the children. The recent crop of potatoes was so extensive that children were able to take some home. They are involved in recycling and composting. Children know that they must wear clothes which are suitable for the weather and must put on their boots from the wellie store if they want to play in the digging patch. They understand about drinking lots of water and taking regular rest periods in hot weather. Children's individual dietary requirements are catered for as meals are cooked on the premises. Staff are able to influence menus by providing feedback to the cook about which foods the children enjoy the most. Children eat heartily and there is very little waste. They practice good hygiene procedures and older children are capable of self care. Children are adopting healthy lifestyles because they are involved in active play and healthy food processes. The children play well together. They enjoy each other's company and sustainable friendships are being made. They cooperate well with staff and know the nursery procedures well. Babies and toddlers are happy to share toys. The older children can initiate their own play activities which ultimately provide further play opportunities for other children. Children's thoughts and views are valued by staff. They receive praise and encouragement from staff which means children grow in confidence and are proud of their achievements.

## 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>The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage</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	1
The extent to which children feel safe	2
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	2
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	1

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