

# The Acorn Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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**Unique reference number**

EY259044

**Inspection date**

05/07/2011

**Inspector**

Janice Linsdell

**Setting address**

Ormskirk C of E Primary School, Greetby Hill, Ormskirk,  
Lancashire, L39 2DP

**Telephone number**

07711 311276

**Email**

routers777@tiscali.co.uk

**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 Playgroup was registered in 2003. The playgroup is privately owned and operates from a classroom located within Ormskirk Primary School in Lancashire. Children also have access to the school hall, library, computer suite and a secure outdoor play area. The playgroup serves children from the local community. It is open Monday to Friday, from 9am to 3.15pm during school term time only.

The playgroup is registered by Ofsted on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. A maximum of 24 children aged from two to under eight years may attend the playgroup at any one time. There are currently 45 children on roll, all of whom are within the early years age range and of these, 34 receive funding for free early education. The playgroup supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The playgroup employs eight members of staff including the manager. Of these, one holds Early Years Professional Status, six hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 and one holds an appropriate early years qualifications at level 2. The playgroup receives support from the local authority and has recently completed an endorsed quality assurance scheme.

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

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

The playgroup is fully inclusive and children thrive because staff are extremely committed and provide outstanding levels of care and support. Overall, exceptional partnerships between parents, carers and other agencies ensure children's individual welfare and learning needs are fully addressed. Staff have excellent knowledge of the Early Years Foundation Stage framework and how children learn through play. This enables children to make significant gains in all areas of their development. Arrangements for self-evaluation and identifying future priorities are highly effective and the playgroup demonstrates an excellent capacity to maintain continuous improvement and sustain high standards.

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

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

- provide more regular opportunities for parents and carers to review their children's progress through their learning and development record.

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

High priority is given to children's safety and security, with extremely effective recruitment, vetting and induction procedures in place to protect children. All staff have attended staff training and have excellent knowledge and understanding of safeguarding procedures. All the required documentation for the safe and efficient management of the playgroup is meticulously maintained. Outstanding arrangements for assessing risks and completing daily safety checks ensure that the environment is always very safe, clean and fit for purpose.

Leaders and managers are extremely dedicated to delivering the highest possible standards. They constantly evaluate all areas of practice and fully implement ongoing development plans. There is a very strong desire to gaining further accreditation for the quality of their provision. Substantial improvements have been made to the outdoor play area to really enhance outside play opportunities for children. The team ethos is inspiring and staff have extensive opportunities to attend additional training.

Equality and diversity is promoted extremely well throughout all aspects of the setting. Inclusive practice is at the heart of everything the playgroup offers and staff have an excellent understanding of children's needs and individual backgrounds. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are extremely well supported. Engagement with parents and carers is very strong, for example, through ongoing communication and tailored guidance about ways parents and carers can support children's learning. Assigned key staff discuss children's individual progress with their parents and carers on a daily basis. End of term meetings are also held to share children's record of achievements, but opportunities to review these at other times throughout the year are less well developed. Excellent arrangements are in place to support children's transition into school because staff work extremely well with teachers, other settings and parents to ensure children's progression and continuity of care and learning.

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

Children are highly motivated and engrossed in their play. As a result, their levels of achievement are excellent in relation to their starting points and capabilities. Their interests are captivated and they thoroughly enjoy their time in the playgroup. The vibrant and highly stimulating indoor and outdoor learning environment offers many exciting opportunities to children to explore. High quality resources and activities are exceptionally well organised, enabling children to initiate their own play and learning.

Children develop high levels of confidence and independence and their behaviour is exemplary. They delight in listening to stories and predicting what might happen next, and show much excitement as they join in with music and dance. Mark making opportunities are provided in abundance and children frequently talk about

the size, shape and weight of objects in their play. Children have great fun gathering and filling the large container with water and removing their shoes to splash their feet. They delight in digging in the mud, reading books in the tent and skilfully using wheeled toys to navigate around the road.

Children's creativity is exceptionally well supported and they are encouraged to express themselves in many different ways. Superb role play areas enable children to develop excellent skills in using their imagination. Children celebrate a wide variety of different cultural festivals to help them embrace and appreciate diversity. The local community is often used to enhance learning experiences for children, such as trips to the book shop or the library. The extremely rich, varied and stimulating play and learning experiences on offer fully supports children to develop their future skills.

Children develop an excellent understanding of the importance of keeping safe and maintaining healthy a lifestyle. Staff actively support children to make healthy food choices and help them to understand how different foods can benefit their health. Children show a strong sense of security because of the high quality interactions with staff. Careful explanations about hazards enable children to develop an excellent understanding of how to stay safe at all times.

## 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> | 1 |
| The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement                                     | 1 |

### 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>            | 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 |
|--|---|

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

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage</b> | 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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## **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