

# Acorns Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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**Unique reference number** EY415533  
**Inspection date** 11/10/2011  
**Inspector** Lynne Pope

**Setting address** Bilton Grange Cp School, Bilton Lane, HARROGATE, North  
Yorkshire, HG1 3BA  
**Telephone number** 07952963186  
**Email** acornsplaygroup@yahoo.co.uk  
**Type of setting** Childcare - Non-Domestic

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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 Playgroup is a Limited Company and was first registered in its current premises in 2007. It re-registered with Ofsted during October 2010 due to a change in status. It operates from its own room adjacent to the Foundation Stage area within Bilton Grange Community Primary School in Harrogate. The playgroup opens Monday to Friday during school term. Sessions are from 8.50am until 3.10pm. Children are able to attend for a variety of sessions. The playgroup is registered on the Early Years Register. A maximum of 24 children aged two to five years may attend the playgroup at any one time all of whom may be on the Early Years Register. There are currently 48 children attending who are within the Early Years Foundation Stage. The playgroup provides funded early education for three and four-year-olds. It supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language.

The playgroup employs four members of childcare staff. Of these, all hold appropriate early years qualifications. The manager holds Early Years Professional Status. The playgroup receives support from the local authority.

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

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

The enthusiastic and dedicated staff have a clear vision for the setting and they create an inclusive environment where individuals are respected and valued. Staff's excellent knowledge of each child's individual needs ensure that all aspects of children's welfare and learning are promoted with great success. Children are cared for in a very safe and secure environment and all records are in place to meet requirements. Exceptional partnerships between parents and other agencies ensure individual children's needs are met and their protection assured. The setting actively seeks to make improvements which help children to make very rapid progress.

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

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

- continue to lead and encourage the culture of reflective practice, self-evaluation and informed discussion identifying the strengths and priorities for development.

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

Morale is very high and all staff take responsibility for what they do within the playgroup. Utmost priority is given to children's welfare. Staff regularly update

their knowledge through attending safeguarding children courses and have an excellent understanding of what they would do should they have a concern. Children are further safeguarded by the setting's effective recruitment and vetting procedures which help ensure the suitability of staff who work with the children. Policies and procedures are regularly reviewed and evaluated to ensure that they cover all necessary aspects. The well established staff work extremely well together as a team. The weekly staff meeting enables them to discuss children's development and decide on the next step for each individual child. All areas are safely managed for children through robust risk assessments that cover any possible hazards in the playroom, garden and on any outings. A daily check list supports this ensuring that hazards are quickly identified.

The setting's strong commitment to improvement enhances all aspects of the provision. Rigorous monitoring and analysis is undertaken by the staff where priorities are identified for the forthcoming twelve months and addressed. Parents and children are involved in the process through questionnaires with parents and discussion with children. This results in well targeted actions being taken which contribute to the setting's sustained improvement. The premises are well maintained and attractively presented to help children to settle happily. Displays of their work, photographs of activities and age-appropriate resources which are easily accessible create a child-friendly environment. This helps to develop their independence. Children flourish as they are given time and space to observe, explore and investigate as they have free access to all areas and the garden. Each child is recognised for their uniqueness and staff encourage all children to learn to value differences and diversity, through activities and sharing information. Staff work very closely with parents and other agencies that may be involved with children that have special educational needs and/or disabilities and children with English as an additional language, resulting in them making good progress. All children are fully integrated into the setting and activities are provided based on each child's interests.

Partnership with parents has a significant impact on children's care and learning. They feel very welcome, comfortable and valued as an expert on their child. Home visits are carried out before children start where their individual needs can be discussed and the child observed in their home environment. This information helps staff to have an excellent knowledge of each child's background and needs. Parents are kept up-to-date through discussion as they drop-off or collect their child. Newsletters are sent out to keep them informed of forthcoming events and a termly meeting is offered so that they can come in and discuss their child's progress. A project to support parents is being introduced where they are invited to attend an evening course. For example, they have been invited to attend a course on how best to support their child's learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Parents enthusiastically stated how happy they are with the standard of care and learning that their child receives. Effective procedures are in place to link with local schools, nurseries and childminders that children also attend which ensures continuity of care and learning.

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

Children settle very well in the playgroup and receive an excellent level of care because the experienced qualified staff work very closely with individual children and their families. Staff provide a very wide range of activities that take into account children's individual learning needs. They provide a well-balanced day that contains suitable periods of time where children mainly follow their own initiated ideas as well as some adult-led activities. Planning effectively supports individual children in their learning and development where they make significant gains. It covers all areas of learning and provides appropriate challenge for all children. Staff observe and assess their progress and use observations to inform future planning and identify next steps in learning for each child. Parents are encouraged to look at their child's learning journal at any time and take the opportunity to do so. They are encouraged to add their own comments or to discuss their child's achievements so that staff can enter them into the file. This gives a full picture of children's progress towards the early learning goals.

From the time they arrive, children are eager to explore whatever is available to them and they meet every new challenge with a real enthusiasm. The environment very effectively supports children's personal, social and emotional skills. Through their interaction with the children, the staff draw out learning and ensure appropriate levels of challenge are available for all. Children demonstrate that they feel really safe and secure as they relate well to staff and visitors. Their discoveries in the garden are effectively supported through reference books being provided. They eagerly look for a picture of the insect that they have found so that they can identify it. As a group they enjoy sitting and joining in with staff as they are read a story. For example, they repeat refrains and anticipate phrases in the story. They begin to use writing as a means of recording and communicating and start to form recognisable letters. Number language is used spontaneously in their everyday activities. For example, they count that they have got four tomatoes in their packed lunch. Staff help them to understand number problems as they ask how many more cups or plates they would need for the number of children. Size language is understood as children say that the member of staff 'looks bigger through the magnifying glass'. Children develop their curiosity and interest in the features of living things as they use a magnifying glass to excitedly examine the worms and earwig that they have found in the garden. Activities such as planting and growing seeds outdoors help children to understand how things grow. They harvest foods such as strawberries and use them to make smoothies. The provision of paint that children can pour and mix themselves enables them to experiment and gain the colour they want for their painting. Imagination is promoted really well with resources such as hoses outside so that children can pretend that they are firemen. Resources that reflect positive images of disability are used in everyday play by the children. This helps them to gain an understanding that not everyone is the same. They explain that the doll with the broken leg needs to sit in the wheelchair and that the doll with a plaster on her eye got paint in it.

Children move freely and with pleasure around the environment both in and

outdoors. The garden can be used in all weathers as children bring their own wellington boots from home and are provided with waterproof suits which children explain are so that they do not get wet and dirty in the sand pit. They negotiate the spaces with success, especially when using bicycles, sitting in cars outdoors or when moving their bodies indoors to the music and action. Children's health and well-being is promoted exceptionally well. Snacks are planned and prepared with great care to ensure that they access lots of healthy options. They are encouraged to recycle left over bits such as skin and pips by placing it in a box on the table which is then taken to the school's eco-garden to compost. Excellent steps are taken to prevent the spread of infection. Policies and guidance are shared with parents and all necessary records and consents are in place. Children develop their own awareness of good hygiene practice explaining that when they have blown their noses they put the tissue in the bin provided. Children are encouraged to develop the habits and behaviour appropriate to good learners, their own needs, and those of others and have excellent self-esteem because they receive lots of praise for their efforts. Children learn how to keep themselves safe through timely reminders from staff.

## 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

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### 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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