

# Acorns Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Type of setting</b>	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 opened in 1972 and is managed by a committee. It was registered in 1992 and is on the Early Years Register to take up to 18 children. It is located in the grounds of Christian Malford Primary School in Chippenham. One large classroom opens out on to a large outside learning environment; part of which is covered. There is a welcoming area where children's coats can be stored, in addition to toilets and a kitchen. The playgroup serves the local area. There are currently 16 children aged from two to five years on roll; this includes 11 children in receipt of free early years education funding. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those for whom English is an additional language, although there are none currently on roll. The setting opens four days a week. Monday to Thursday during school term times only. Sessions are from 8.30am until 3pm. There are four part time staff working with children, all of whom hold early years qualifications. The manager has just completed a foundation degree in Early Childhood studies. The setting receives support from a teacher/mentor from the local authority and has links with the host school and other providers.

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

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

Acorns is an outstanding place to come and learn. The pre-school's work of keeping children safe and meeting their needs and interests are at the heart of its exceedingly happy atmosphere. It is an inclusive setting where diversity is celebrated. The leadership and management work tirelessly to improve and have rightly identified the need for closer links with other providers, demonstrating outstanding capacity to further improve. Parents and carers really appreciate the work of the staff and say the preschool is a 'WOW place!'

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

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

- liaise further with other providers delivering the Early Years Foundation Stage to successfully promote children's learning and development.

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

The highest priority is given to safeguarding children at this extremely effective preschool. Policies and procedures are regularly visited and shared with parents and carers. Staff are very well qualified and suitable to work with children and have a clear understanding of their duties and responsibilities for child protection.

Risk assessments are rigorous and cover all the aspects of the preschool's work. In addition, the staff teach children how to make their own risk assessments. For example, before making cement for the paving slabs in the garden, children discussed the possible dangers and why they would need protective clothing, such as goggles to protect their eyes.

The manager is an excellent organiser and regularly monitors and reviews the preschool's provision. In consultation with staff, committee members, parents and carers and children, she draws up action plans for further improvement. Ambitious but realistic targets are set and regular checks on progress made. Through excellent self-evaluation, she has an accurate picture of Acorns and works very well with the other adults to maintain high standards.

All staff have a clear understanding of how children develop and learn and are actively encouraged to further their knowledge through training. The deputy manager has just finished a project to improve children's communication and has delivered staff training to share good practice. She is very effective in promoting excellent links with parents and carers. For example, she has produced information leaflets and has also set up a noticeboard about 'Top Tips for Talking', to enhance parents and carers' understanding of how to support children's learning at home. Staff meetings are productive times when everyone contributes thoughts, ideas and suggestions. Parents and carers are regularly consulted and constantly kept in touch.

The creative, exciting and stimulating outside area is closely supervised and is a favourite activity of the children. In planning for outside learning, the staff have thought very carefully about the challenges to develop children's curiosity, ability to solve problems and to think critically, and to have enjoyable and satisfying experiences. The indoor area is equally exciting. It is well-organised and resourced with a wealth of toys and educational equipment and is rich in labels, letters and numbers. Resources are excellent and well maintained to promote children's independence and to take responsibility for their own learning. Equality and diversity are promoted to an excellent extent. This is an inclusive setting where children and adults are fully respected and differences are celebrated and shared. The key worker system is highly effective to help staff meet the needs and interests of all children; consequently children make outstanding progress.

There are outstanding links with parents and carers. They support the preschool with 'WOW moment' notes for their child's 'Learning Journey', because they know the importance of tracking children's progress across the areas of learning. Best use is made of parent and carers' skills. Links with professionals such as the speech therapist and the host school are equally as strong. Relationships with other providers, however, are still developing. The manager is aware that arrangements for sharing information when a child attends more than just this setting are not rigorous enough.

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

Acorns is most welcoming and there is a family feeling as soon as you enter. The staff make the accommodation attractive and child-friendly and it buzzes with activity and creativity. Children have a great sense of belonging and develop

exceedingly happy and carefree relationships with each other and staff. Every child gets on so well together. They accept any differences in each other's needs, language, culture or background. It is a truly harmonious society.

Children make excellent progress across the areas of learning because of outstanding input from adults. Children's particular needs and interests are matched well to the excellent activities planned, and as a result develop self-esteem. The key workers identify what children are interested in, and this feeds into each day's plan. This supports each child's own lines of enquiry and exploration. Staff make accurate and detailed observations of children at work and share their assessments with parents and carers. Children also know what they can do because the staff show them photographs of themselves and their achievements. Children learn with enjoyment the beginnings of reading, writing and mathematical thinking. They explore the world around them and eagerly attempt technology games and challenges. They are highly motivated, eager, confident and prepared to have a go at new tasks and activities, take photographs of each other at work and closely observe and put into words their findings. For instance, when children made stretchy playdough to make pies for dragons, rats and spiders, they poured water on top of flour and oil. Staff missed no opportunity to draw children's attention to what is happening. They looked closely then one shouted, 'Wow it looks like double water.' Staff develop children's vocabulary, comprehension and ability to evaluate what they have heard. For example, at story time children decided they wanted to hear 'The Three Little Pigs' once again. They sat and listened carefully, joined in the parts they knew and operated the puppet characters. The adult asked open questions and children responded, showing how well they had listened by recalling events and linking the story with 'What's the Time Mr Wolf?.'

Children know how to act in the case of an evacuation and are developing a mature understanding of how to keep themselves and each other safe. Eddie Ears the teddy bear visits children's homes in turn. This weekend he watched horse riding but could not join in 'because he would get dirty and he had no hat if he fell off and got hurt' children said. Water is available throughout the session and they were observed helping each other. They pay attention to washing their hands correctly because they have been shown how, and notices and pictures remind them. They eat healthy snacks prepared by their peers and wash up after themselves.

Children are exceptionally well prepared to go on to their next phase of education. They have positive attitudes to learning, excellent behaviour and love the excitement of finding out and learning that little bit more. Children are extremely happy and love coming here and have no difficulty at transfer time, because they have been so well prepared for primary school.

## 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	2
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

<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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