

# Children 1st

Inspection report for early years provision

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**Unique reference number** EY440074  
**Inspection date** 07/06/2012  
**Inspector** Patricia Webb

**Setting address** Draycott Road, Tean, STOKE-ON-TRENT, ST10 4JJ

**Telephone number** 0115 973 2600

**Email**

**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*.

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**

Children 1st @ Acorns was registered in 2011 and is part of a large, family-owned business covering 15 registered settings. It is sited in a single-storey building in Tean, Stoke-on-Trent. It operates Monday to Friday, from 7.30am to 6pm all year round. Children from six weeks of age to 12 years may attend the setting. Additional provision is available for older children after school and during the main school holidays.

The setting is registered on the Early Years Register and both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. A maximum of 140 children under the age of eight years may attend at any one time. There are currently 196 children on roll, of whom 81 are in the early years age range. All staff are qualified to level 3 or above, including staff with Early Years Professional status (EYPS) and qualified teacher status (QTS). The setting is a member of the National Day Nurseries Association and the company holds an Investors in People award.

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

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

Children flourish in the setting as they progress very strongly in all aspects of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Exceptional organisation of the leadership and management is highly effective in planning for continuous improvement. This enhances the care, learning and development opportunities for all children and their families. Enthusiastic practitioners enjoy the role they play in each child's progress. The setting is highly committed to reflecting on the practice and how this impacts on children's progress. The management is keen to develop the staff training programme to build upon key skills and qualifications thereby promoting consistency in practice.

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

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

- extending the training programme to further raise staff skills and qualifications to ensure the quality of provision continues to improve.

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

The setting implements extremely sound policies and procedures for safeguarding children. Staff are very confident in their knowledge and understanding of their roles and responsibilities in reporting any child protection concerns. The procedures for the recruitment and selection of staff are exceptionally rigorous and robust. This assures parents that all staff are suitable to work with children and

that relevant vetting procedures have been completed. Further appraisal systems ensure that staff's ongoing suitability is assessed regularly. Children are further safeguarded as stringent risk assessments are carried out on all aspects of the provision. This includes attention to the premises indoors and outdoors, outings and assessments for individual staff and children where necessary.

The organisation is wholly committed to continuous improvement and has undertaken substantial refurbishment of the setting to enhance children's enjoyment and learning opportunities. This includes the provision of an excellent range of resources and equipment that is extremely well-organised to promote children's independence and ability to initiate their own activity. Much of the work is referred to in the highly reflective evaluation of the provision. Staff, parents and children are involved in the evaluation process, fostering a strong sense of partnership working and improvement based on the needs of the children and their families. For example, the setting is seeking nominations from parents to act as representatives on the parent forum. A children's council is also being developed to capture children's views and opinions. Children are effectively supported in learning about the diversity of the world they live in through their ready access to positive images and experiences in resources and activities. The organisation as a whole is able to call upon skills and expertise from its wider pool of staff to support the setting with regard to specific aspects of practice such as expanding the use of non-verbal communication and leadership and management. Training needs are currently being assessed with the staff team within the setting using the organisation's own fully accredited training academy.

Partnerships with parents, other providers and agencies are extremely effective. Parents are encouraged to become actively involved in their child's progress, using a range of ways to share what children do and learn at home and link that to overall development. Parents express deep pleasure with the improvements implemented by the company citing for example, the 'family feel' and the emphasis on early education as key areas. Parents are pleased with the way in which they have been kept informed of the recent changes. Children's transition to the next care base or full-time school is handled in very positive ways. Key workers accompany children in this process, ensuring that they can feel settled and secure as they cope with change. Staff work cohesively with other agencies who may be involved in individual children's care and learning plans to ensure consistency.

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

Children are masters of their own learning as they thrive in the setting. Recent changes to the layout of the environment have been evaluated and show how children develop independence of thought and action in each age range. Babies hone their early physical development as they crawl in the comfy and clean baby room, using the furniture to pull to standing and delighting in noticing their reflection in the large safety mirror. This helps them to gain a sense of self and take first steps as staff celebrate such milestones with parents. Children's progress is carefully observed, recorded and evaluated to plan for next steps that are pertinent to each child. Parents supply detailed care information to children's key

workers, confident in the relationships that staff build with the children. This enables staff to get to know children's intrinsic characters and use their interests and stages of ability leading to flexible, personalised planning. Staff have a very sound knowledge and understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage, using their high expectations of what and how children learn to capitalise on every possible opportunity. For example, staff use open questions to encourage children's thinking as they discuss the reasons for creating a 'time capsule' to be buried in the garden. Staff also use a wide and varied vocabulary to broaden children's communication and language development. Children are encouraged to consider the 'coincidence' of the Queen's head being on the coins and stamps they examine.

Collecting some apples from the kitchen for snack time enables a member of staff to encourage the child to add and calculate how many pieces of fruit they have and how many are actually needed. Babies begin to problem solve as they explore the pop-up shape sorter, delighting in achieving and seeking the acknowledgment of this from familiar adults. Exceptional use is made of the equipment and resources as all children enjoy free-flow activity indoors and outside. Larger static climbing equipment encourages children to test out their skills and confidence. They are supported by staff to consider their own safety and the safety of others as they play. A group of children begin to construct Buckingham Palace, directed by one of the children who reminds them to don their hard hats to 'be safe'. Inspired use is made of photographs and posters to remind children about safety around the setting, particularly with regard to the entry and exit points. Children use real tools, utensils and implements with care and dexterity as, for example, they fill in the hole dug for the time capsule using a garden spade.

Children gain awareness of the differences in society as they discuss different cultures and languages, such as Punjabi and Greek. They try other foods and enjoy outside visitors sharing their differing jobs. Children show care and consideration for their environment as they visit local amenities, such as the recycling centre, and encourage their parents to bring items from home for junk modelling. Many of the older children write their names clearly and delight in annotating some of their art work before they proudly display it on the low-level boards. The development of children's self-esteem is a key strength within the setting. Children delight in having their actions noted on the achievements tree, such as helping a friend to settle on arrival by finding the child's favourite toy. Children's health and well-being are strongly promoted. Children know about following familiar care routines for hand washing and dressing appropriately for outdoor play. They tuck in with relish to home-cooked meals that are balanced, nutritious and served in a very pleasant and homely environment. Parents express their delight at having the opportunity to taste some of the meals served to the children during a recent review of the menus.

## 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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## **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