

The Acorns Nursery School

59 Denmans Lane, Lindfield, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH16 2JN

Inspection date

25/04/2013

Previous inspection date

17/02/2011

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This inspection:

1

Previous inspection:

1

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend 1

The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children 1

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision 1

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision is outstanding

- Children's care, welfare and learning is significantly enhanced by the highly effective way the nursery is led and managed.
- Children make excellent progress from their starting points.
- There is a warm, friendly atmosphere, characterised by busy, well occupied and happy children who enjoy their time at this welcoming nursery.
- Staff show a very clear ambition to provide exceptional care and education for all children and work in great partnership to achieve this.
- Staff develop impressive partnerships with parents and carers and involve them fully in the nursery and their children's care and education.

Information about this inspection

Inspections of registered early years provision are:

- scheduled at least once in every inspection cycle – the current cycle ends on 31 July 2016
- scheduled more frequently where Ofsted identifies a need to do so, for example where provision was previously judged inadequate
- brought forward in the inspection cycle where Ofsted has received information that suggests the provision may not be meeting the legal requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage or where assessment of the provision identifies a need for early inspection
- prioritised where we have received information that the provision is not meeting the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and which suggests children may not be safe
- scheduled at the completion of an investigation into failure to comply with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The provision is also registered on the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. This report includes a judgment about compliance with the requirements of that register.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed activities taking place within the home environment and garden play.
- The inspector held discussions with the provider/manager and the staff team.
The inspector discussed and sampled records and documentation relating to:
- children's progress and development, safeguarding and welfare, ratios, risk assessments and records relating to self-evaluation.
- The inspector took into account the views of parents spoken to on the day and parental feedback on the self-evaluation form.

Inspector

Janet Thouless

Full Report

Information about the setting

The Acorns Nursery School opened in 1985 and is one of three settings, privately owned. It uses the ground floor rooms of a house in Lindfield, West Sussex and there is a secure outdoor play area. The nursery school is open five days a week from 9am to 3pm during school term times. There is a childminding service available from 8am to 9am and 3pm to 6pm for children who attend the nursery. The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory part of the Childcare Register. There are currently 36 children on roll in the early years age group, attending different times of the week. The nursery is in receipt of funding for the provision of free early education to children aged three and four years old. The nursery supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children with English as an additional language. The nursery employs eleven staff, of these, two hold Early Years Professional Status and Qualified Teacher Status, one holds Qualified Teacher Status and a relevant degree and seven hold appropriate childcare qualifications. One is a music graduate who will shortly be beginning a PGCE. The nursery receives support from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

To further improve the quality of the early years provision the provider should:

- strengthen opportunities for children to care for their environment to develop further their understanding of the world.

Inspection judgements

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend

Children make exceptional progress in their learning and development. This is because the highly knowledgeable and experienced staff team support children's progress and development extremely well. Staff have a very good understanding of the areas of learning. They plan an excellent range of activities that inspire and challenge children as they play. Therefore, children are highly motivated and show an excellent interest in all that they do. In addition, an extremely well resourced home environment where children can make independent choices as they play supports children's learning further. A very good balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities ensures that children are the prime instigators in their own learning. Staff have high expectations of children and are aware of their capabilities. Key persons have an excellent knowledge of children's starting points in learning, their individual care needs and parents' preferences. Children's 'learning journeys' record their personal information and achievements. This enables parent to see

at a glance their children's progress. In addition, a termly child profile which includes children's next steps is shared with parents to review and add their comments. These records actively encourage parental feedback, which creates a two way flow of information between parents and staff and keeps parents up-to-date and involved in their children's progress.

Staff fully involve themselves in children's play and provide excellent levels of support. Staff engage children in many conversations and children excitedly talk about what they are doing. They select from an excellent range of creative media as they make sheep, inspired by a recent outing to the farm. They discuss how sheep keep warm by wearing a woolly coat, what they eat and how they live together in a flock. Children giggle when staff ask them if sheep lay eggs - 'No, ducks lay eggs' comes their reply. This demonstrates that children feel totally comfortable in the care of the staff. Children excitedly set about making a car from a cardboard box in their workshop. Staff support children's learning by asking questions such as 'How will you attach the wheels to your car?'. Children problem solve by deciding that sticky tape will attach the wheels and talk about their round shape to move their car forward. In addition, when children draw, staff focus their attention to the round shape of a plate and children identify and explore the number of round patterns on the plate. Staff extend this learning further by asking children if they can identify other round shapes within their environment. Consequently, children are provided with excellent opportunities to further develop their problem solving and mathematical skills as they learn through play.

Excellent opportunities are provided for children to develop an interest in books. Staff introduce and display a very good range of story and reference books that excite and involve children. The use of puppets and artefacts enhances children's listening skills, curiosity and enjoyment of books. Staff model writing for a purpose by displaying labels and captions around the environment and provide opportunities for children to write for a purpose. Older children enjoy reading with staff and there are frequent opportunities to explore letters and sounds. Older children are confident talkers and are extremely happy to share their thoughts and ideas with others, initiating and engaging in many worthwhile conversations. Overall, children are developing excellent skills in preparation for their next stage of learning.

The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children

Children arrive with great enthusiasm and show confidence as they place their coats and shoes on their assigned pegs, put on slippers and self register. They then choose a badge with a smiley or sad face and attach it to their name. This enables staff to discuss with them their feeling and the feelings of others. Staff engage purposefully with children and make good use of questioning. Questions such as 'Tell me, where do you think your slippers might be?' when one child is unable to locate them prompts their independence and problem-solving skills. As a result, children make very good progress in their personal, social and emotional development.

The nursery is exceptionally well resourced to inspire children's independence, creative

activity and thinking skills. Interesting items and artefacts are placed around the nursery which inspire children and initiate conversations as they play. For example, a lemon plant with ripe lemons, bowls of shells and displays of seeds, bulbs and reference books on nature. Children's behaviour is excellent. Staff set very high standards and expect high standards from the children, creating a harmonious atmosphere in which they treat each other and staff with respect. Staff recognise bilingualism as an asset and promote the use of first languages such as French and Spanish. Children sing songs such as the days of the week and count during daily routines in these languages. This promotes a fully inclusive nursery environment.

Children's wellbeing is exceptionally well supported through the promotion of healthy eating, provision for outdoor play and outings. Children are fully involved in meal preparation helping to set the table for lunch and prepare meals. Dishes from around the world ensure that children from different ethnic backgrounds are catered for. Parents are invited to cook traditional meals such as a variety of Greek starters and baklava for children to sample. Outdoor play is a key feature in children's learning. They explore nature in garden play. They plant, nurture and harvest an excellent range of plants and vegetables. As they play, children discover a broken pot and staff seize this opportunity to invite children to look carefully at the root system. As a result, children are given excellent opportunities to explore nature although staff have not fully explored ways for children to consider re-using resources such as rainwater to extend their understanding of the world even further. Children benefit from many visits in the community to help them learn about their immediate environment. They attend concerts at the local church, explore a local nature reserve and farm and enter competitions such as 'Flower in Bloom'. When on outings children thoroughly enjoy splashing in puddles, walking on muddy paths or climbing felled tree trunks. This allows children to take risks and to recognise their own capabilities and limitations.

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

Leadership is inspirational and management have high aspirations for maintaining excellent quality. This underpins all aspects of care and education in the nursery. The nursery manager is highly qualified and oversees curriculum planning to ensure the highest levels of achievement for all children. The nursery team are highly committed to closing the gaps in achievement for all children, in readiness for school. The staff team work closely with a wide range of external agencies to support children and families and to secure any necessary intervention. Staff continually reflect on their practice and use their excellent knowledge and understanding of the learning and development requirements to support children's learning. This ensures that children are very well prepared for the next stage of their learning. The views of children, parents and staff actively contribute to the excellent self-evaluation process which systematically improves the quality of provision.

The nursery has robust recruitment, vetting and induction procedures in place to check staff are suitable to work with children. Children's safety is paramount and they are well protected as all staff are knowledgeable about safeguarding procedures. Staff attend

training and know precisely what steps to take should they have any concerns about children in their care. Comprehensive risk assessments cover all aspects of the premises and any outings from the nursery. Up to twelve children are allowed to play in the garden at any one time. The nursery risk assessment reflects this.

Staff have developed extremely positive relationships with parents. The nursery invites parents to make a nursery book. This is a highly personalised book which includes the alphabet alongside photographs and pictures which are special to the children for each letter and sound. In addition, children's creative work is added giving them a wonderful keepsake to refer to with their parents at home. Parents are very complementary on the service provide. Comments include 'I feel very fortunate that both my children have had the opportunity to start their learning in such a nurturing and inspiring nursery' and 'One of the most exceptional qualities of the nursery is the dedication and commitment of the staff, I have rarely met such passion for children's learning'. The staff team are very successful in encouraging parents to be involved in their children's learning. Frequent meetings take place where parents are updated on the latest developments in early years. In addition, meetings are arranged for parents whose children are leaving to go to school. This gives parents the opportunity to discuss what is required to aid a smooth transition.

The Childcare Register

| | |
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| The requirements for the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are | Met |
| The requirements for the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are | Met |

What inspection judgements mean

Registered early years provision

| Grade | Judgement | Description |
|---------|--------------|---|
| Grade 1 | Outstanding | Outstanding provision is highly effective in meeting the needs of all children exceptionally well. This ensures that children are very well prepared for the next stage of their learning. |
| Grade 2 | Good | Good provision is effective in delivering provision that meets the needs of all children well. This ensures children are ready for the next stage of their learning. |
| Grade 3 | Satisfactory | Satisfactory provision is performing less well than expectations in one or more of the key areas. It requires improvement in order to be good. |
| Grade 4 | Inadequate | Provision that is inadequate requires significant improvement and/or enforcement action. The provision is failing to give children an acceptable standard of early years education and/or is not meeting the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be inspected again within 12 months of the date of this inspection. |
| Met | | The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider continues to meet the requirements for registration. |
| Not met | | The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider does not meet the requirements for registration. |

Inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of provision that is registered on the Early Years Register. The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and care, known as the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Setting details

| | |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Unique reference number | 113349 |
| Local authority | West Sussex |
| Inspection number | 911208 |
| Type of provision | |
| Registration category | Childcare - Non-Domestic |
| Age range of children | 2 - 8 |
| Total number of places | 16 |
| Number of children on roll | 36 |
| Name of provider | Janet Irwin |
| Date of previous inspection | 17/02/2011 |
| Telephone number | 01444 455081 |

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Type of provision

For the purposes of this inspection the following definitions apply:

Full-time provision is that which operates for more than three hours. These are usually known as nurseries, nursery schools and pre-schools and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the higher fee for registration.

Sessional provision operates for more than two hours but does not exceed three hours in any one day. These are usually known as pre-schools, kindergartens or nursery schools

and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the lower fee for registration.

Childminders care for one or more children where individual children attend for a period of more than two hours in any one day. They operate from domestic premises, which are usually the childminder's own home. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Out of school provision may be sessional or full-time provision and is delivered before or after school and/or in the summer holidays. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. Where children receive their Early Years Foundation Stage in school these providers do not have to deliver the learning and development requirements in full but should complement the experiences children receive in school.

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Piccadilly Gate
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M1 2WD

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