

# The Acorns Day Nursery

St. Stephens Junior School, Hales Drive, CANTERBURY, Kent, CT2 7AD

<b>Inspection date</b>	21/11/2013
Previous inspection date	Not Applicable

<b>The quality and standards of the early years provision</b>	<b>This inspection:</b>	
	Previous inspection:	
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 welfare and learning are enhanced by the exceptionally effective management of the nursery. Excellent use of reflective practice forms the basis of the drive to improve and enhance outcomes for children further.
- A highly effective key person system results in children showing a great sense of security and confidence, they are clearly happy and at ease in the nursery.
- Very good relationships between the nursery and parents, there are effective ways to involve them in ideas and activities to promote children's learning.
- Resources are of a very high quality and help to stimulate children's learning and development.

## 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.

## Inspection activities

- The inspector observed children's play and staff interactions in play rooms and in the outdoor environment.
- The inspector held a meeting with the manager of the nursery.
- The inspector completed a joint observation with the manager in the outdoor area for the younger children.
- The inspector took account of the views of the parents spoken to on the day of the inspection and from information provided by parents in their feedback on a variety of workshops provided by the nursery.
- The inspector scrutinised records and a sample of supporting documents including those for: children's development and progress; safeguarding; self-evaluation and improvement plans; staff recruitment processes; local authority visit reports and daily registers.

## Inspector

Bernadette Gibbs

## Full report

### Information about the setting

The Acorns Day Nursery was originally registered in 2009. It re-registered in 2013 and is privately owned by St. Stephen's Academy, Canterbury. The provision operates from purpose built premises in the grounds of St. Stephen's Junior School, Canterbury, Kent. Children can access two rooms and large secure outdoor play spaces. The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register. It is open Monday to Friday, from 8am to 6pm for 48 weeks of the year. There are currently 46 children on roll who all fall within the early years age range. Children aged two, three and four years receive funding for nursery education. The provision currently supports children with special educational needs. They also support a number of children who learn English as an additional language. The provider employs 11 members of staff who all hold relevant early years qualifications at National Vocational Qualification level three and above.

### What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- extend peer observations to include all members of staff to enhance their professional development as well as room leaders and managers.

### Inspection judgements

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

Children thrive in the exceptionally stimulating nursery environment, making excellent progress in all areas of learning and development because teaching and learning is outstanding. The staff team is extremely enthusiastic and motivated and all have a thoroughly secure knowledge of the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage. The spacious environment provides high quality resources and furniture organised and presented to encourage children to freely access toys and activities which engage and inspire them. Clear labelling and photographs throughout the nursery provide rich opportunities for children to learn recognise words. All staff use Makaton basic signing so that children at the early stages of learning to talk or those for whom English is an additional language are able to say 'please', 'thank you', 'more' and other words to make their needs known.

Adult-led group activities and child-initiated free explorative play are very well balanced allowing children the time and freedom to become deeply involved instigators of their play. For example children are able to choose from a variety of resources in the creative art area which are presented in such a way that children help themselves to paint in squeeze bottles choosing to squeeze the colours they want into pots, mixing them together with brushes or their hands exploring the properties and spreading paint in a

variety of ways and experimenting for a considerable time.

Outdoor play is an integral part of everyday life at the nursery, on the day of the inspection torrential rain did not disrupt this. Children learn to stay safe outdoors as a child conducts a risk assessment of the garden daily with an adult. This gives them an understanding and a sense of responsibility for their own safety. Children independently change into wellington boots and find their coats before going out, waterproof capes are also available if children choose to put these over their coats. The outdoor play area provides the additional challenge of larger equipment for both rooms with slopes, wheeled toys, gardening equipment, large sand pits, guttering, planks and outdoor kitchens. Two of the younger children just at the stage of being steady on their feet showed delight in the thrill of 'running' down the grass slope, climbing back up and repeating the process a number of times. This helps them to build core muscle strength and gain confidence and take risks in a recently learnt skill.

Children's starting points are clearly established using comprehensive information from parents and observations by the key person during the first two weeks attendance. Observations are continually assessed using available guidance, to plan future activities and logged on to the Kent Progress Tracker. Meticulous monitoring of children's progress by the key person and the manager ensure that any gaps in the children's learning are identified and planned for therefore each child is making optimum progress in all areas of learning and development. The progress check for children aged two years is completed in line with legislation and the same format is provided to parents every two months. As a result and because of a workshop for parents on the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage parent spoken to feel very informed and knowledgeable about the progress their children are making.

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

Children demonstrate they feel safe, secure, confident and happy as they thrive in the company of their friends and adults in the nursery. Very close attachments are formed with their key person and children in their key person group as they have special time together either playing games or performing tasks such as tidying a particular area of the nursery. This gives the children a very strong sense of belonging and responsibility within the group. Home visits are offered to families as well as settling in visits tailored to each child's needs as often as is necessary. Photographs of children's families are displayed, along with those of staff, supporting children to develop a sense of their own identity which they can share with their friends.

Lunches provided by the school kitchen are planned to be healthy and nutritious. Parents are informed in writing each day about the food their child has. All children, including the very youngest, serve themselves spooning mashed potato and baked beans or spaghetti hoops or using tongs to take a sausage. Makaton is used to good effect enabling none verbal children to say 'yes please' and 'thank you' using good manners at the table. At snack time children use sharp knives to competently cut up fruit and vegetables giving the children further opportunities to be independent.

During the move between rooms in the nursery sensitive settling-in visits take place for children with their familiar key person spending time with them as they meet their new key person and explore the new environment. This ensures children are thoroughly reassured and secure during this time with the familiar key person being on hand if needed. The manager is to investigate the possibility of moving a member of staff on a permanent basis when children move room not only for the benefit of the children but for the professional development of the staff in working with different age groups.

Both rooms have dedicated quiet calm areas for children to sleep in with cots for the youngest children and floor mats and cushions for older children, these areas are separated by drapes and have subtle lighting on the ceiling. These ensure that children have a restful sleep. Checks are made and records kept of sleeping children to promote their safety at all times.

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

The provider and manager are fully aware of their responsibilities in meeting the safeguarding and welfare requirements and the learning and development requirements of the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage. A very thorough recruitment process coupled with a comprehensive staff supervision cycle, training and termly discussions during staff meetings ensure child protection and safeguarding take a high priority. All staff can identify the signs and symptoms that might give cause for concern about children's well-being and know the action they must take. Consent is in place from parents to administer emergency first aid or to seek medical advice if needed. Staff conduct risk assessments, involving children in the process, and are vigilant in minimising potential hazards ensuring children are safe at all times. This demonstrates that managing children's safety is central to the running of the nursery.

Inspirational leadership and management strive to maintain the excellent quality of teaching and learning in line with the learning and development requirements. The manager involves all staff members in evaluating all aspects of the nursery using a variety of audit tools and incorporating the views of parents and children. This results in realistic action plans being set to improve things further, with current focus on the home corner in the younger children room and the creative and mark making area for the older children as both are not being accessed as often as other areas.

Regular staff supervisions take place where children's progress is monitored and discussed putting individual plans in place to ensure all children are achieving to their full potential. Relationships with colleagues are discussed giving the opportunity for any concerns about inappropriate behaviour being brought to the attention of management. Contribution to the team is assessed alongside peer observations, where support is needed further training is identified or use of the internet to find expert guidance. However, the manager is considering the possible benefits for the professional development of staff by extending peer observations to include all staff in doing these as well as room leaders and the

manager.

Parents spoken to during the inspection concurred with the feedback from questionnaires that parents feel fully involved and informed of the progress their children are making. Parents fully appreciate the involvement of the outside agencies working with the nursery. The process of children to move to school works extremely well as the children are familiar with the reception class and the teacher from regular sharing of the school resources during their time at the nursery and by the teacher visiting the nursery.

## 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	Requires improvement	The provision is not giving children a good standard of early years education and/or there are minor breaches of the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be monitored and inspected within twelve months of the date of this inspection.
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 monitored and inspected again within six 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	EY461957
<b>Local authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	920232
<b>Type of provision</b>	Full-time provision
<b>Registration category</b>	Childcare - Non-Domestic
<b>Age range of children</b>	1 - 4
<b>Total number of places</b>	38
<b>Number of children on roll</b>	46
<b>Name of provider</b>	St Stephen's Academy Canterbury
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	not applicable
<b>Telephone number</b>	01227819648

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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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