

Acorns Nursery

St Johns Centre, St Johns Road, Oakley, Basingstoke, Hampshire, RG23 7DX

Inspection date	01/04/2014
Previous inspection date	10/03/2011

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

- Staff plan and provide children with a wonderful, rich and purposeful learning environment, which sparks children's interest and enthusiasm for learning.
- The accuracy and rigour of assessments of what children know and can do supports effective planning for each child's next steps in learning. As a result all children make excellent progress and are well-prepared for their next challenges.
- Staff place a high priority on helping children develop exceptional personal, social, emotional skills and as a result children learn very positive behaviour.
- Children's needs are quickly identified and exceptionally well met through highly effective partnership working between staff, parents and local agencies.
- Staff consistently give the highest priority to the safety and well-being of children and support their growing understanding of how to keep themselves safe and healthy.

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 a wide range of activities across all areas of the nursery and talked with staff and children about what they were doing.
The inspector reviewed documents and procedures relating to safeguarding, staffing, supervision, risk assessment, equal opportunities and health and safety, and checked a selection of other policies.
- The inspector sampled a range of children's records, the nursery's systems for planning, evaluation and exchanging information with parents and external professionals.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents spoken to on the day and reviewed written communication from parents.
- The inspector met with the leadership team and conducted a joint observation with the manager.

Inspector

Helen Robinshaw

Full report

Information about the setting

Acorns Nursery registered in 2007. It is registered on the Early Years Register.

The nursery operates from the St John's Centre in Oakley, near Basingstoke, Hampshire and is privately managed. It includes a large playroom with doors leading to a covered patio and secure outdoor play area. The setting is all on one level and suitable for wheelchair access.

The nursery is open on each week day during school terms only. It operates from 9am to 3.30pm each day except Friday when it closes at 12noon. Children may attend for a variety of sessions full-time or part-time. The nursery is in receipt of funding for the provision of early education for two, three and four year old children. Staff currently support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who have English as an additional language. There are 38 children on roll, all are within in the early years age range.

The nursery currently employs nine members of staff to work directly with the children. The manager holds Early Years Professional Status which is a level six qualification, and seven other members of staff hold relevant qualifications at level three. The nursery also employs a trainee.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- use the website update to showcase the impact of nursery practices on children's lives and increase opportunities for continuity of learning between home and nursery

Inspection judgements

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

Children make excellent progress in their learning and development at this inspiring, lively nursery. Staff design and offer education programmes of a very high quality, and shape these to meet the individual needs of children. Activities and resources available indoors and outdoors stir children's curiosity and imagination across all areas of learning. Attentive staff give children time to develop their own ideas and carefully choose the appropriate moment to add another idea, challenge or tool for the task. Such high quality teaching strategies help children learn through their play and exploration, discover and achieve in new areas, and plan and review their actions. Children acquire the knowledge they need to build a strong foundation for learning, while also developing skills in how to learn,

explore and think for themselves. They are therefore, extremely well prepared for the next stages in their learning at home, in the community and at school.

Staff know the children in their care well, start with what they enjoy and skilfully extend their understanding. Even the youngest children take part in planning their activities through long-term 'scribble plans'. With their key person acting as a scribe, small groups of children scribble, draw or 'write' the things they like to do on large pieces of paper. Staff ensure that children can access the resources necessary for all these activities during the following weeks. Staff change vehicles and construction materials, role-play and craft areas, games and books regularly to keep children actively engaged, interested and appropriately challenged. An extensive range of communication strategies help keep parents and carers informed of their children's activities at the nursery. Families also add to the weekly planning sheets by pinning up children's drawings, ideas or achievements from home. Staff are active in developing new opportunities to support children's continuity of learning between home and school.

Staff delight in extending children's knowledge of themselves and the world around them and children thrive in this exciting, nurturing environment. For example, when a child asks 'What does my brain look like?' staff show children how to look through a reference book of the body. Planning for the week's activities quickly changes to include searching suitable websites for more information and borrowing brain scans for children to see x-rays first hand. Captivated children examine skeletons, trace pictures of bone structures and work together with staff to make their own x-rays for a light box. Staff help children turn a role-play area into a doctor's surgery. Children practise using a stethoscope on their patients and on a wide selection of dinosaurs. Staff pick up their enthusiasm by linking dinosaur skeletons with opportunities for art, movement and design. Role-play and ideas take a new turn as children become fascinated about treasures in the natural history museum. Throughout each week, staff deliver rich, varied and imaginative experiences which ignite children's desire to learn.

Children make significant progress across all areas of learning and development because staff carefully observe, evaluate and plan to enhance their achievements. All staff date and jot down daily observations of children's interests and accomplishments. This helps the entire staff get to know all the children at the nursery. Each child's key person gathers and presents these observations and photographs in individual learning journals. Notes on children's achievements are organised according to areas of development with each section beginning with a one-page overview of progress over time. This means that parents and other members of staff may easily see and share updates on their children's progress. Daily conversations between parents and staff add to this process, along with meetings to review termly written updates and progress checks. Children's next steps in different areas of development are clear. This guides weekly planning and teaching that enriches the lives of every child, on a continual basis.

Management and staff aim to work with parents to close any gaps or delays in children's learning as quickly as possible. Where they require further support from external specialists, interventions to help children are prompt and timely. Dedicated staff draw on considerable experience and training to support parents as they meet children's individual or special educational needs and/or disabilities. All children make significant levels of

progress while at the nursery. This puts children in the best possible position to adapt to, manage and make the most of, the next steps in their learning.

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

Children's behaviour shows how safe, secure and happy they feel within the nursery. This reflects the positive relationships staff and parents develop as they settle children into the nursery. Staff find out about children's likes and dislikes, needs and preferences before children attend for trial sessions. This helps them plan activities that will quickly distract and engage children while introducing them to new friends and simple daily routines. Where necessary, staff reassure parents and nurture children's confidence by making home visits. Staff also support families by attending meetings at the local children's centre and through close working with other agencies or settings. Parents commend staff for their dedication to meeting the individual needs of children and their families. They comment on how much their children enjoy attending the nursery and their own confidence in the staff.

Staff place the highest priority on keeping children safe and developing their personal, social and emotional skills. Staff use daily events to advance children's competence in each of these areas. For example, children team up together and move large cardboard tubes and plastic guttering from a covered area to an outdoor sand pit. Staff are quick to help children learn to co-operate, listen to each other and spot when a friend needs help, because they consistently model positive behaviour. They follow children's ideas, but gently add suggestions to raise awareness of risks and facilitate the safe management of the project. Children learn to communicate their ideas, be tolerant when others do not understand and develop some self-control. For example, while immersed in a game, the older children find a drinking cup outside. They know the rules about hygiene and responsibly take the cup inside for washing. Children already appreciate that the golden rules of the nursery have a purpose, and that purpose is generally to keep everyone safe and well. They learn to apply the rules to everyday situations because staff regularly rehearse the behaviours they expect from children in context. Children try to rise to those expectations and generally behave very well, showing they are learning how to value and respect each other.

Children become increasingly independent in managing their own hygiene and personal needs. Pegs, toilets and washbasins are all at children's height so they learn to hang up their own coats, use the toilet and wash their hands when they need to. Clear systems are in place to record nappy changes and to maintain high standards of hygiene when staff do so. The system to dispose of dirty nappies runs less smoothly so the nursery is considering further options for this. Children have access to their water bottles throughout the day, which staff top up at points through the day. They also learn to pour their own milk or water at meal times and help staff to prepare and clear their snack. In the warmer months, staff help children learn to grow, nurture and harvest foods they can eat. This helps children understand seasonal variations in produce and the effort and time it takes for plants to grow. Parents also visit to share recipes from around the world. Children taste new foods and spices and take part in preparing and sharing meals in different ways.

The termly planning includes celebrations of equality and diversity through activities children can relate to and begin to understand. For example, children show their delight when a member of staff sits with them in the garden playing her guitar. One by one, and then all together, they try out shakers and musical instruments from around the world. Children learn to stop and start on time, and play their instruments softly or with increasing intensity.

Children weave materials and make mobiles following the traditions of people who live in different parts of the world. The nursery garden is full of evidence of interesting projects and discovery, from mud kitchens to story time hideaways. Children develop their physical skills and strength as they master various well-secured apparatus for climbing and balancing. A large outdoor canopy enables them to enjoy plenty of fresh air and garden play, whatever the weather. The nursery provides a highly stimulating environment with a wealth of easily accessible resources providing infinite possibilities for young imaginations. Children flourish in the care of their attentive staff who provide security, guidance and a personal focus as children take on new challenges. Staff prepare children carefully for moves to new ventures and new schools. Most of the children move on to the local primary school. Where children move on to other settings staff are also highly effective in working closely with families and colleagues. School leavers are excited by forthcoming changes while staff and parents are confident that the children are emotionally strong and ready.

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

The leadership team work exceptionally well together, knowing and complementing each others' strengths and drive for improvement. Diligent and caring staff support them well and have high expectations for themselves and for the children in their care. The team have a secure understanding of the nursery's robust policies and the procedures to implement to meet the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage to a very high standard. Procedures to track, target and monitor the progress of children are precise across all areas of learning and development. As a result, managers are highly effective in ensuring that all children achieve the very best they can with any additional support they need. Managers also carry advisory roles within the early years community and have strong links with the local children's centre. Good relationships with services and professionals across the area ensure that all children's needs are exceptionally well met.

Managers routinely evaluate the quality of the educational programmes and the learning environment. Responses from parent questionnaires, along with written and spoken comments and concerns also inform plans for improvement. One of the current initiatives involves staff and parents joining forces to tidy up and prepare more new ventures in the garden area. The nursery is an integral part of the village with willing helpers from past parents, older siblings and the local community. Other areas of development focus on improvements in technology so parents may access information about the nursery and their child's progress via another channel.

The management team clearly respect and implement the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. All staff routinely update their training in safeguarding children and know how to protect children appropriately. Staff meetings maintain a strong focus on sharing and reviewing policies and procedures to keep children safe and healthy. Contact details for the Local Safeguarding Children Board and for Ofsted are clearly on display on a parent notice board. Recommended procedures for parent complaints and mediation are also on display along with staff qualifications and skills. Staff note, and managers investigate, any concerns raised by parents. Thorough reviews lead to monitoring and improvements which are shared with all those concerned. Parents comment on the substantial range of information available to them via indoor and outdoor daily updates, home-nursery communication books, newsletters and informal and formal meetings. They say this helps them to stay in touch with their children's activities and practice some of the songs, rules and ideas at home.

Systems for vetting and recruiting new staff are thorough with clear procedures in place for induction training, appraisals and supervision. This helps to ensure that all the staff working with children are and remain suitable to meet their needs. Routine procedures for risk assessments and daily checks of each area also help to keep children safe. All staff have recently updated their training in first aid and routinely update first aid boxes. All mandatory documentation for the safe management of the nursery and for sharing information with parents is in place and accurately maintained. Staff follow established and well-understood routines with regard to nappy changing and maintain high standards of hygiene in this area. Staff and children practise evacuation drills at different times of the day and week so that all children know how to move to safety without being too upset. Staff work consistently to create an environment that is welcoming, safe and stimulating. Children flourish in their warmth and care.

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

Unique reference number	EY346310
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	961461
Type of provision	Full-time provision
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 5
Total number of places	24
Number of children on roll	38
Name of provider	Oakley Acorns Ltd
Date of previous inspection	10/03/2011
Telephone number	07717 504 878

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Type of provision

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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
Store St
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M1 2WD

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