

# Acorn Playgroup

Neston Primary School, Burton Road, Little Neston, NESTON, CH64 9RE

<b>Inspection date</b>	13/11/2014
Previous inspection date	15/03/2011

<b>The quality and standards of the early years provision</b>	<b>This inspection:</b>	2
	Previous inspection:	2
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		2
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		2
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		2

## The quality and standards of the early years provision

### This provision is good

- Children are content and happy in this friendly playgroup. They settle easily and form strong bonds with their key persons, as staff sensitively encourage them to develop their confidence and independence.
- Staff demonstrate a good understanding of their responsibility for safeguarding and protecting children from harm. As a result, children's needs are well catered for and they are kept safe and secure at all times.
- Effective teaching strategies are in place to help children develop early language and communication skills and to support their physical, personal, social and emotional development. As a result, all children are well prepared for their next stage of learning.
- Leadership is good because those in charge have a good understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage. They monitor how well staff support and teach children to make sure all children are doing as well as they possibly can.

### It is not yet outstanding because

- Partnerships with parents are not maximised as staff do not always encourage parents to share information about what their children do at home. Consequently, staff do not always follow up on children's achievements or interests at home to promote even swifter progress.

## **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 toured the premises and observed activities indoors and outside.
- The inspector conducted a joint observation with the manager.
- The inspector had discussions with the provider and manager of the provision and also spoke to the staff and the children.
- The inspector looked at children's observation and assessment records and the planning documentation.
- The inspector checked evidence of suitability and qualifications of the staff and the provider's evidence of self-evaluation.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents and carers spoken to on the day.

## **Inspector**

Ron Goldsmith

## Full report

### Information about the setting

Acorn Playgroup is a privately owned and managed pre-school group. It was registered in the current premises in 2007 and is on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. It operates from designated rooms within Neston Primary School in Neston, Cheshire. All children have access to an enclosed outdoor play area. The playgroup is open Monday to Friday, from 9am to 12pm and 12.30pm to 3.30pm, during term time only. There are currently 35 children attending who are in the early years age group. There are 11 members of staff who work directly with the children. Of these, one holds Early Years Professional status and Qualified Teacher Status, a further member of staff holds Qualified Teacher Status and five members of staff holds a qualification at level 3 in early years. A further three members of staff hold a qualification at level 2 in early years and two are currently working towards a qualification at level 3. The playgroup provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. It supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The playgroup receives support from the local authority early years advisory team and is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance.

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

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

- strengthen the already good partnerships with parents by providing them with more opportunities to share what their children do at home, so that staff can use this information to further promote children's progress.

## Inspection judgements

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

Staff know the children well and talk confidently about where they are in their learning and development. They gather useful information from parents when children first attend the playgroup and use this information, along with their own observations, to identify the starting points in children's learning. Children's progress is recorded and shared with parents, to keep them informed about how well their children are doing. The progress check for children between the age of two and three years is carried out and also shared with parents. This helps to identify any concerns and ensure that any gaps in development are quickly acted upon. As a result, children are supported to make good progress. In addition, staff seek help from a range of professionals to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Observations of children are regularly evaluated to identify what they are learning and what staff need to do to support their continuing progress. Planning is linked to children's individual interests, which ensures they are engaged and eager to take part in the activities on offer. Consequently, children develop a broad range of skills, as well as a positive disposition and attitude towards learning. This

helps to prepare them well for future learning, such as when they move on to school.

Staff participate well in children's play and the quality of teaching is good. They engage children in conversation and children chat comfortably with them. For example, in the outdoor environment children talk with staff about what they doing with large building blocks as they create a long balancing beam. They use the structure to test their skill in balancing and jumping, and staff allow children to develop their risk taking by supervising them discretely. Children learn about numbers through songs and rhymes and through counting in everyday situations. When children play in the sand and water they weigh, count and compare items. They measure volumes of sand into different containers and gain an awareness of shape, size and numbers. Staff demonstrate skill by knowing when to interact with children to extend their learning, and when to allow children to explore without direct adult involvement. The healthy approach to rigorous physical exercise is continued indoors. The youngest children thrive as staff promote movement and exercise by playing and singing songs with plenty of actions. Older children go to the main school hall to have more expansive physical movement opportunities, which they all delight in. The experienced and enthusiastic staff encourage all children to join in and enjoy the activity. Children show an interest in the natural world because they grow flowers and watercress and enjoy the outdoor sensory garden, with various fragrant plants, such as aniseed. Staff encourage children to make their own choices of when to play outside as they provide continuous free flow to all areas. Children's behaviour is good and they willingly cooperate in activities, such as making and blowing bubbles which float away outside. These first-hand experiences all enhance children's learning.

Staff recognise and value the role of parents, which results in a very positive partnership. They work closely together to exchange information about the children. For example, all parents receive daily verbal feedback, newsletters and an opportunity to attend a parents' evening. Parents are able to read children's learning records and have a regular summary of their progress. They comment that they enjoy discussing their children's progress with their child's key person and are delighted with the progress their children are making. Communication between parents and the playgroup is effective and, for the most part, supports children's learning. However, staff do not always explore opportunities to find out about what children are learning at home. Therefore, they are not able to use this information to help children progress even more swiftly. Parents are encouraged to view their children's learning journal with a consistent key person, and to inform the playgroup of what they feel their children can already do when they first start. This contributes to an initial assessment and supports children's ability to quickly settle into the playgroup from home. Parents' evenings are a success, enabling them to contribute to their children's progress. Conversations with parents confirm they are very happy with the level of communication and they feel involved in their children's learning. Overall, children are gaining the key skills needed to support their future learning.

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

Children are content and confident at the playgroup. They happily engage with activities and staff offer encouragement through meaningful praise and support. Staff successfully meet the needs of each child and value them as individuals. There is a strong focus on

developing children's personal and social skills. Staff ensure children settle into the playgroup by talking to parents during the settling-in process, to find out about children's likes and dislikes and incorporate this into their planning. As a result, all children are included in activities. Children's emotional needs are very well met because staff have built secure, responsive attachments with them. Staff ensure a good range of resources and learning opportunities are provided. The wide range of toys and resources cover all areas of learning and are attractively displayed or stored, so that children can independently access them. This helps children to become independent learners.

Children's behaviour is good because staff have a positive approach towards behaviour management. They calmly deal with any minor disagreements and act as good role models. They promote friendships between children by encouraging them to play alongside each other, take turns and to recognise the importance of sharing. Children are learning to respect and have regard for the feelings of others. Staff remind children how to keep themselves safe, for example, by encouraging them to consider the risks when they play outdoors, balancing on the large wooden blocks. Children are provided with good opportunities to access fresh air and exercise in the outdoor play area and also enjoy active play indoors, in planned and imaginative movement classes. While outdoors, children run, climb and jump from the wooden structures that they build. They ride bicycles and enjoy being in the fresh air. As a result, they develop good physical skills. Children take small risks, appropriate for their age, for example, by climbing onto wooden structure they build and jumping off with appropriate support from nearby staff.

Staff effectively promote healthy lifestyles. They provide healthy snacks of pears and apples, with milk or water to drink. Staff talk to children about the benefits of eating healthily and use snack time as an opportunity to skilfully talk to children about number, shape and pattern. Children are encouraged to wash their hands at appropriate times during the day and staff sensitively support them as they visit the bathroom. Consequently, children are beginning to develop healthy habits and independently manage their self-care needs. As such, they are developing the skills they will need when they go to school. Staff work closely with teaching staff to support children through their move and talk enthusiastically to them about what to expect. Children become familiar with the host school environment where most of them will attend, as they regularly visit reception class. As a result, they are emotionally well prepared for their move to school.

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

Staff have a good understanding of the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. All staff have attended recent training to update their knowledge around child protection issues, and they know how to promptly refer any concerns about a child's well-being. Consequently, children are safe and secure in the playgroup. Staff undertake comprehensive risk assessments indoors and outdoors and for all outings. Robust recruitment procedures ensure that all staff are suitable to work with children. There are effective systems for recording accidents and meeting children's dietary requirements, and all staff are clear about these procedures.

Management demonstrate a good understanding of the responsibility in meeting the learning and development requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Regular team meetings, appraisals and individual supervision meetings contribute to a process which further develops the confidence and competence of staff. The individual strengths and skills of the team, and any identified weaknesses, are supported via professional development, such as through training and ongoing support. Consequently, all staff feel valued and are motivated and committed to extending their knowledge and skills to provide better outcomes for children. Staff use their professional skills and expertise effectively to plan and monitor a varied programme of activities that cover the seven areas of learning in depth. They demonstrate a secure understanding of how children learn. Effective monitoring ensures that the planning and assessment process is consistent and precise, and that all children's skills and abilities are accurately identified, with the appropriate support provided. As a result, all children make good progress and any children with identified needs are provided with appropriate interventions. The manager works alongside her team on a daily basis, with all staff contributing to the weekly planning. Therefore, she has first-hand knowledge of what the staff and children do.

The commitment to partnership working with parents and external agencies is strong, well-established and effectively contributes to meeting children's needs. Staff work closely with a range of professionals, such as speech and language therapists. They use available support and advice and are keen to implement suggestions to enhance their practice. Close liaison with the host school and sensitive support provided by staff ensures that children are prepared for their move on to school. Staff have established warm and effective partnerships with parents. They speak highly of the stimulating environment, the progress their children are making and how they are made to feel welcome. They are kept fully informed of the playgroup's policies and procedures, and their views are regularly sought. Effective links with the local authority early years team are incorporated into the planning for enhancing practice. Managers have identified a number of priorities for the playgroup through a reflective approach to self-evaluation. This ensures the playgroup continues to develop and improve.

### **The Childcare Register**

The requirements for the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are	<b>Met</b>
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The requirements for the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are	<b>Met</b>
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## 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. We re-inspect nurseries and pre-schools judged as requires improvement within 12 months of the date of 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		There were no children present at the time of the inspection. The inspection judgement is that the provider continues to meet the requirements for registration.
Not met		There were no children present at the time of the inspection. 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>	EY361455
<b>Local authority</b>	Cheshire West and Chester
<b>Inspection number</b>	873600
<b>Type of provision</b>	
<b>Registration category</b>	Childcare - Non-Domestic
<b>Age range of children</b>	0 - 17
<b>Total number of places</b>	26
<b>Number of children on roll</b>	35
<b>Name of provider</b>	Linda Margaret Pritchard
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	15/03/2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	07752 870 607 or 01513382500 ext 4

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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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