

Acorns Playgroup

Church Road, Christian Malford, Chippenham, Wiltshire, SN15 4BW



Inspection date

4 June 2015

Previous inspection date

30 January 2012

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		Outstanding	1
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		Outstanding	1
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		Outstanding	1
The setting meets legal requirements for early years settings			

Summary of key findings for parents

This provision is outstanding

- Children flourish at Acorns whatever their ages or abilities under the exceptional care and teaching of adults who want only the best outcomes for each child. Staff place children at the centre of all they do. Children have a great deal of fun.
- The manager has the highest expectations. She recognises the professional development of staff as key to maintaining extremely high standards. All adults are keen to train and gain qualifications. They use their new knowledge and skills successfully to provide an exciting learning environment.
- Staff create varied play spaces filled with enticing resources and activities that children explore eagerly. Outdoor play is central to the pre-school's ethos and children happily spend hours outside engrossed in their experiences. Children make significant progress from their starting points.
- Children gain excellent coordination through physical challenges. Staff give children the freedom to learn how to play safely by testing their own abilities while keeping a watchful eye on them.
- Links with parents and other professionals involved with children are outstanding. The manager perseveres to obtain extra support and funding so children who need additional help get it. This means staff prepare children thoroughly for school.
- Relationships across the pre-school are excellent. Children are extremely secure. They trust the staff who meet their physical and emotional needs to an exceptionally high standard.
- The manager provides thoughtful leadership and is an excellent role model to her staff team. All constantly seek ways of improving the pre-school's service with clear aims.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- check that staff keep alert for chances to promote letters and their sounds during activities.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed children's experiences and the quality of staff teaching.
- The inspector held discussions with the manager that included improvements made since the previous inspection.
- The inspector talked with adults working with children, and with some children and parents, and took account of their views.
- The inspector sampled documentation including children's assessment records, the safeguarding policy and staff files.
- The inspector undertook a joint observation with the manager.

Inspector

Rosemary Davies

Inspection findings

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend. This is outstanding

Staff provide experiences that reflect children's current interests. They allow children to lead their play. Children move around indoors or outdoors as they wish. They choose and mix resources freely, and the pre-school is a hive of industry and creativity as children satisfy their curiosity and use their imaginations. They create a 'bat car', for example, to drive from the 'bat cave' to the 'bat cinema'. Staff are on hand to question, guide and suggest, resulting in children's purposeful and sustained play. Staff provide appealing activities to develop children's early literacy and mathematical skills. For example, children created paper peapods and carefully counted the number of tissue paper peas they made, while learning new words such as 'scrunch'. Staff do not always keep alert for chances to promote letter sounds to aid early reading, although children quickly learn to recognise their names. Children rapidly gain coordination skills and some write their names clearly.

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

At Acorns, staff get to know children and their families extremely well. Staff gain a very clear picture of children's abilities and needs from the start. They work closely with parents, for example, to aid toilet training. Children benefit from the strong link with the adjacent school that provides tasty healthy meals at lunchtimes. Some older children eat their meals in the school, which helps them become aware of school life. Staff help children going to other schools to prepare, such as by becoming familiar with their new uniforms. All children are prepared for change by developing high levels of confidence and positive attitudes to learning. They learn how to behave with guidance from staff so that children of all ages get on happily together. Staff make excellent use of resources. They teach children how to turn taps, use the climbing net and manipulate the large toy cement mixer. Children gain useful personal skills, such as learning to pour drinks with great care.

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

The committee, manager, staff and volunteers have clearly defined responsibilities, which they know. The manager ensures adults meet requirements to an extremely high standard. Many changes made since the last inspection have improved the pre-school further. For example, the book corner has been re-arranged to aid children's concentration and staff have embraced new technology to assess, track and record children's progress accurately. Parents find this system useful and say it is now much easier to support their children's learning at home. Parents and staff let each other know the same day when children have achieved something new, or have needed extra attention. This approach means staff meet children's individual needs exceptionally well.

Setting details

Unique reference number	199426
Local authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	826112
Type of provision	Full-time provision
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	2 - 5
Total number of places	18
Number of children on roll	29
Name of provider	Acorns Playgroup Committee
Date of previous inspection	30 January 2012
Telephone number	07816280810

Acorns Playgroup opened in 1972 and registered with Ofsted in 2001. It is located in the grounds of Christian Malford Primary School in Christian Malford, near Chippenham. The pre-school committee receives funding to provide some free early years education for children aged two, three and four years. The pre-school opens four days a week from Monday to Thursday during school terms. Sessions are from 8.30am until 3pm. There are five staff working with children, three of whom hold recognised early years qualifications. The manager has a relevant qualification at level 6.

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