

Acorns Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number EY346310
Inspection date 10/03/2011
Inspector Melissa Cox

Setting address St Johns Centre, St Johns Road, Oakley, Basingstoke,
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Type of setting Childcare on non-domestic premises

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Introduction

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Description of the setting

Acorns Nursery was registered in 2007. It operates from the St John's Centre in Oakley, near Basingstoke, Hampshire and is privately managed. The nursery uses the main hall as a playroom and there is a large outdoor play area and has sole use of the premises during opening hours.

The nursery is registered with Ofsted on the Early Years Register. A maximum of 24 children between the ages of two years and five years may attend the nursery at any one time. There are 24 children on roll, all are within in the early years age range. The setting is in receipt of funding for the provision of early education for three and four year olds. The nursery supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who have English as an additional language. The nursery is open on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays between 9.10am and 11.40am and on Tuesdays and Thursdays between 9.10am and 3.10pm during school terms only. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The nursery currently employs eight part time members of staff to work directly with the children. The manager holds Early Years Professional Status which is a level six qualification, and four other members of staff hold a level three qualifications or above. The remaining staff have suitable childcare qualifications. The nursery employs a number of volunteers and additional staff.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

Children are provided with exceptional levels of care and make significant progress in their learning and development. Practitioners offer a fully inclusive and welcoming service, supporting all children to actively participate in activities which wholeheartedly meet their individual interests and developmental needs. Highly effective partnerships between providers, parents and other agencies ensure individual children's needs are met and their protection assured. Children are confident, independent and enjoy their time at the setting. The setting is led by an energetic, highly-motivated and extremely enthusiastic management team who embrace the process of self-evaluation and demonstrate a dynamic approach towards continuous improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the high quality early years provision the registered person should consider:

- continuing to evaluate the effectiveness of the new outdoor provision

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Staff have designated roles and responsibilities in relation to safeguarding children. There are very effective procedures in place for identifying any child at risk of harm and liaising with the appropriate child agencies. Children's welfare is fully protected by the extensive recruitment and vetting arrangements which ensure all adults with unsupervised contact children are suitable to do so. Robust induction procedures ensure staff are suitable and knowledgeable about all aspects of their work. The professional development of all staff is given high priority ensuring all staff are able to continue to develop their knowledge and understanding of all aspects of childcare and development.

The staff team are wholly committed to a shared ethos where the child is the top priority. Children experience very effective and supportive procedures to settle them in successfully and the information collected right from the start contributes to personalised individual learning plans. This ensures that learning experiences are expertly based on the children's needs and capabilities. An impressive action plan to totally redevelop the garden area is well underway in order to provide more interesting outdoor experiences, although this is still becoming fully embedded into the everyday routines.

The setting enjoys an outstanding partnership with parents and carers. Parents really value the staff for their support and appreciate the opportunities that exist for meaningful conversations about their children and their development. Parents receive a written summary of the progress their children are making in a format which encourages them to share milestones they have observed at home and includes them in deciding what children need to do to make further progress. Parents speak very highly about the setting and state that the key strength is the well-established experienced staff team and the wonderful outdoor facilities. Staff value each families linguistic and cultural diversity and very effectively promote children's developing awareness and understanding of people's differences and similarities.

Practitioners are dedicated to working with external agencies to support the inclusion of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Children's individual identities are nurtured and practitioners are dedicated to adapting the provision to meet the constantly changing needs of the children who attend. In addition, practitioners have successfully established links with other early years settings that children attend to ensure continuity of care and effective progression. The setting's owners are inspirational and act as exceptional role models to all staff throughout the nursery. They work really well together as a team providing high levels of support to each other, which in turn means that children are extremely well supported. The whole staff team work collaboratively to maintain practice through continuous improvement. Expert analysis and very effective self-evaluation ensures that the nursery constantly evolves and improves. The setting have addressed the recommendations set at the last inspection and work in constant partnership with their Local authority support worker to enhance their practise further. Regular staff meetings and in-house training sessions provide valuable opportunities for practitioners to share good practice and to identify their training

needs, which are prioritised by the manager. There is a proactive and shared vision for inclusive practice, ensuring every child can achieve as well as they can regardless of their background.

The quality and standards of the early years provision and outcomes for children

Practitioners demonstrate an excellent knowledge and understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage and how to promote children's learning and development. The setting effectively acquires children's starting points at registration and this enables practitioners to value and build upon their existing skills. Practitioners plan purposeful activities, which reflect a range of learning opportunities, covering all six areas of learning. Children benefit from a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities and the routine is flexible to allow them to pursue their own interests. Practitioners demonstrate a positive approach to supporting children's learning needs and to enriching the quality of education provided and as a result, children are motivated and interested to learn. Children flourish as practitioners spend the majority of their time at their level, interacting with them. Practitioners are skilled at asking questions to develop children's thinking and to consolidate their learning. The ongoing two-way exchange of information between nursery and home has a positive impact upon children's welfare.

From the time they arrive, the children are eager to explore whatever is available to them and they meet every new challenge with a real enthusiasm. Through their interaction with the children the staff draw out learning and ensure appropriate levels of challenge are available for all. Children's social skills and ability to communicate with others are rapidly enhanced, so that they are developing the underpinning skills needed for their future success. Staff sit with them and join in with the games, repeating words automatically to aid understanding and help develop language skills with the very young. Staff provide for spontaneous and planned heuristic play with a selection of both natural and man-made household items and artefacts to discover and investigate.

Children work alongside their peers, interacting with each other, building social skills and developing skills of independence. Children of all ages are provided with opportunities to practise their mark making skills using a variety of resources. Older children develop their mark making further, practising forming recognisable letters as they label their own work. Daily routines and activities such as circle time and snack time provide good opportunities for children to practice their understanding of numbers and counting and to use their conversational skills.

The learning environment is bright, welcoming and child-friendly, affording children plenty of space to explore. The outdoor play facilities for all children are outstanding and children really benefit from this as they are allowed to free flow both in and outdoors as they choose. Children develop an understanding of how to stay safe as practitioners use outings as a valuable opportunity to discuss road safety and children routinely learn about health and safety through activities and daily routines.

Practitioners use positive strategies to help children to observe good social skills, behave well and respect each other. Children are offered praise, encouragement and rewards and practitioners understand that this helps to foster their confidence.

Children develop a strong understanding of diversity as practitioners encourage positive, open discussion about people's similarities and differences. Children have ample opportunities to become independent and to make choices, for example, by selecting what they would like to eat and pouring themselves drinks. In addition, children are given regular responsibilities throughout the session, which include peeling the fruit for snacktime or clearing away after eating. Children respond very well to the simple routine which gives pattern to their daily lives.

Children's families are highly valued at the nursery; photographs are gathered to encourage children to recognise their family members. There are very effective staffing ratios and children are cared for in small groups which enables the key workers to get to know them all extremely well and this contributes to ensuring that activities are securely based on children's interests and needs. As a result of access to such supportive staff and a highly engaging environment, young children feel secure, safe and able to play and learn with confidence and enthusiasm. Children become absorbed in the activities on offer and are involved in active learning for extended periods of time.

Children really thrive in the nursery because excellent consideration is given to their health needs. Snacks are made from fresh and nutritious ingredients and individual dietary requirements are strictly adhered to. An extremely high standard of cleanliness is maintained in the areas used by children. Children follow extremely successful routines and practices to promote their understanding of healthy lifestyles and keeping themselves safe.

Annex A: record of inspection judgements

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	1

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	1
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding	1
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	1
The effectiveness of partnerships	1
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	1

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	1
The extent to which children feel safe	1
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	1
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	1

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