

# The Acorns Nursery School

Inspection report for early years provision

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**Unique reference number** 113349  
**Inspection date** 17/02/2011  
**Inspector** Daphne Prescott

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**Type of setting** Childcare on non-domestic premises

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

The provider must provide a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must provide a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Childcare (Inspection) Regulations 2008 regulations 9 and 10).

The setting also makes provision for children older than the early years age group which is registered on the voluntary and/or compulsory part(s) of the Childcare Register. This report does not include an evaluation of that provision, but a comment about compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Register is included in Annex B.

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## Description of the setting

The Acorns Nursery School opened in 1985 and is one of two other settings, privately owned. It uses the ground floor rooms of a house in Lindfield, West Sussex and there is a secure outdoor play area.

The nursery school is open five days a week from 9am to 3pm during school term times. There is a childminding service available from 8am to 6pm for children who attend the nursery.

A maximum of 16 children aged from two to under eight years may attend the setting at anyone time.

There are currently 24 children on roll, attending different times of the week. The setting is in receipt of funding for the provision of free early education to children aged three and four years old. The setting supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children with English as an additional language.

The setting is registered on the Early Years Register and compulsory part of the Childcare Register.

The nursery employs eight staff, of these four hold appropriate childcare qualifications and four are working towards a childcare qualification. The setting receives support from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership.

## The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

The provider and staff team provide excellent support to all children, which is extremely successful in enabling them to make positive progress within an inclusive environment. The relationships developed with parents and other professionals are excellent and fully promote and value a working partnership. The well managed systems in place ensure the setting works very effectively with parents and children to evaluate and reflect on all aspects of their practice. This ensures they continue to develop and improve the excellent quality and outcomes for all children.

## What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- extend further opportunities for children to become involved in writing for

different purposes outside

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

This is a very well run setting and exceptional care is taken to ensure the safety and well-being of all the children. They offer a very secure environment, and regular risk assessments are carried out on the premises and for when outings are planned to ensure that children are kept safe. The safeguarding of children has a high priority. The provider and staff team have a very clear understanding of child protection issues and how to protect children if there are concerns that a child is being harmed. The recruitment and selection process is robust to ensure staff and those who have contact with children are suitable to do so. Excellent staff supervision ensures that children are continually kept safe. Furthermore, concise policies and procedures are in place to safeguard children and to protect their welfare.

A high quality and varied range of toys, materials and resources are provided to meet the needs of the children attending. All equipment is in good condition and is easy to access, thus helping the children to become confident and independent from an early age. Children are developing great knowledge and understanding of diversity and the wider world through the range of resources and other artefacts which reflect other cultures and traditions. The setting has excellent procedures in place for supporting the children who are learning English as an additional language so that they make very good progress in all areas of their learning. They are well aware of the different languages that children speak and they know about the cultural backgrounds of all of the children attending. Activities are adapted to ensure all children are included and receive positive experiences. There are highly effective procedures in place to ensure other agencies or providers who may be involved in the children's lives have opportunities to successfully share information regarding children's progress and development.

Partnership with parents is outstanding; the setting works extremely well with the parents. They keep them exceptionally well informed and provide many opportunities for them to know how well their child is developing. They share information in a number of ways, including through very informative photographic evidence on a computer and parent forum's to share information and ideas. The setting has a joint project with the parents where they work together on developing their child's 'Nursery School Book'. It provides a wonderful record of their child's learning journey and achievements. Furthermore, the provider writes rhymes which are included in their books. The parents and the setting read them to the children, encouraging the children to enjoy the rhymes as part of supporting their communication, language and literacy. Parents find this extremely helpful and they feel very involved in their children's learning as a result. Furthermore, they value the home environment, the professional team and their children are extremely happy at the setting.

The provider truly values the importance of self-evaluation and reflective practice to improve the outcomes for children. She works very closely with the staff team

and involves the children and parents in their evaluation process. This ensures all users of the setting contribute to its continuous development and improvement. The recommendations from the last inspection have been successfully addressed. The provider employs a whole group approach and all staff are enthusiastic and passionate about their roles in raising standards for children.

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

The children show exceptional enjoyment in coming to the setting because the activities provided are both interesting and fun and they are made to feel very secure in this homely environment. Consequently, they are well motivated and challenged, and progress well in all areas of their learning. The key person takes account of each child's starting points, which they take forward in promoting their interests and confidence. The staff's sensitive observations and assessments ensure children's individual needs and capabilities are fully recognised. The children have individual learning journey files. They provide a wealth of information and photographs on what the children do and the ongoing progress they make and their next steps in their learning. The provider and staff know the children extremely well and the quality of relationships is strong, resulting in high levels of co-operation and support. Children's behaviour is exemplary, and they demonstrate excellent social skills of sharing and taking turns. Furthermore, children's emotional well-being is truly fostered. On arrival at the setting, the children choose 'feelings clips' as they self-register to let the staff know how they are feeling. Staff discuss with the children about why, for example, they are happy or sad.

The brilliant provision for learning ensures that there is a balance of adult-led and child-led activities based upon their areas of interest. The provider and staff act as motivating role models for all of the children, asking open-ended questions to challenge their thinking and develop communication skills. This successfully ensures children engage well in their learning. For example, following a delivery of toys and resources children have a wonderful time playing with the cupboard boxes. This led to an interesting discussion about how they could construct a house out of the different sized boxes. Children develop wonderful imagination as they use their pretend work tools to saw and hammer the boxes. The resources provided support children with problem solving skills, such as working out how to use sticky tape to add a chimney pot to their construction. Later, outside in the garden a group of children work together harmoniously painting their house. Children's communication, language and literacy is progressing extremely well as they enthusiastically share books and ask staff to read stories. They have frequent opportunities to mark make using a variety of materials indoors, children develop their ability to identify letters through the use of phonic sounds and written labels. Through a wonderful range of art and craft materials children develop their creativity. For example, they paint at the table painting with brushes or their hands and use recycling materials to create their own wonderful designs. Visits in the local community provide additional experiences for the children, such as attending a musical concert in the Church. Children are developing very positive attitudes to

their learning and this prepares them well for the future.

All children are extremely content and settled because their individual health, physical and dietary needs are met to an exceptional standard. Children develop an excellent understanding of how to stay safe as staff use outings as a valuable opportunity to discuss road safety. Their understanding of safety issues is also demonstrated through their play as they recognise and confidently talk about dangers and how to keep themselves safe. Healthy nutritious snacks and meals, using locally sourced produce are freshly prepared and cooked on the premises by the setting each day. Lunch time is a truly family occasion for the children where they all sit down with the provider and staff to eat their lunch. They all relate well to each other and are very sociable as they join in conversations with each other. Children can also access independently drinking water as part of their healthy diet. Very effective hygiene practices are reinforced during toileting and mealtimes with the children. Outdoor play is captivating and constantly evolving. The provider is currently considering new and innovative ways that children can become actively involved in mark marking activities outside in the garden. Children thoroughly enjoy being physical and outdoor play is a wonderful experience as children play on the adventure playground equipment. They are skilled at negotiating the pathway while riding their bikes and they thoroughly enjoy playing ball with their friends.

## 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

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

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

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	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

<b>Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	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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## **Annex B: the Childcare Register**

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are: Met

The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are: Met