

My Acorns Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector Karen Prager

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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

Holy Trinity Acorns Pre-school opened in 1990. It operates from two rooms and a church hall in the Shaw district of Swindon. The group serves the local area.

The pre-school is registered on the Early years register and both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register to provide full day care to children from age two years. The registration is for up to 36 children in the early years age group. There are currently 58 children from two to five years on roll. This includes 46 funded children. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school opens from 9.00am till 12.00noon or 11.30am till 2.30pmj Monday to Friday. Children attend on a full or part-time basis. There are eight members of staff who work with the children. All of them have appropriate early years qualifications. The setting receives support from the local authority.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children are happy and settled in this nursery. Individual learning and development needs and interests are well met and children make good progress. Children's welfare is effectively supported through well organised systems. Staff work well together and form positive relationships with parents to support children's well-being in the nursery. The staff team demonstrate a strong desire to provide high quality childcare and effective systems are in place to monitor and move the provision forward. This ensures positive outcomes for children are promoted.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- develop the organisation group times to ensure all children are engaged and suitably challenged
- provide more regular opportunities for children to play outside
- provide a better balance of adult led- and child-initiated activities

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children are protected well because staff have a secure understanding of safeguarding procedures and know the necessary procedures to take to protect

children in their care. Risk assessments are in place for the premises and outings undertaken. Written policies and procedures are shared with staff and parents to effectively promote good quality childcare practice. The staff team demonstrate good team work and a strong drive to improve the provision for children. Evaluation of the provision is ongoing and includes all staff, committee members. The views of parents are regularly gathered through questionnaires and informal discussion and used to inform areas to improve. Children's views are sought through photographic evidence and discussion and observation. Parents and children are regularly invited to offer their views and suggestions to improve the provision. A suitable development plan is in place and actions taken have a positive impact on the outcomes for children. Staff are well supported by the manager and as a consequence morale is high. All staff have obtained appropriate childcare qualifications and staff are actively supported in gaining additional qualifications. Staff liaise effectively with external agencies and regularly attend additional training to ensure their knowledge of good quality childcare practice continues to grow.

The staff appropriately and actively promote equality and diversity. Children with additional needs are promptly identified and action taken to ensure the child gets the support needed. The premises are bright and welcoming with the walls covered in displays and examples of children's artwork. Resources are easily accessible to encourage children to explore. There is some limited access to outside play space and regular visits are carried out within the local environment, to the local park and farm. However, opportunities for children to make choices about learning inside or outside are not available.

The partnership with parents is very positive and ensures that each child's key person develops a thorough understanding of their welfare and learning needs. An ongoing record is kept of children's development. This is available to parents at all times and shared with them, along with a summative assessment of their child's development, at parents meetings. Informative notices are displayed at the entrance to the pre-school and regular newsletters are issued. The pre-school operates an open door policy, encourages parent helpers. The staff team welcome and value input from parents and others who care for children. Parents give very positive feedback about the nursery and feel that the friendly welcome they receive is a core strength and reflects the inclusive nature of the pre-school.

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

Children settle well and become secure and confident. They enjoy the time they spend in the pre-school, developing positive relationships. The staff team plan activities within themes, such as Italy or valentines, each week. These require both adult involvement and independent discovery. They observe children's development and record the information in their learning journals. They link the information to the six areas of learning and use the information to assess the progress children make and identify their next steps towards all the early learning goals. An effective key person system is in place and staff work together well to

ensure that all contribute to the children's development record and plans for the future. A broad range of activities are provided which children freely access. As a result most children are making good progress in relation to their starting points and capabilities. Parents are encouraged to support the children in developing their knowledge of letters. A letter of the week is chosen and shared with parents and children's awareness of the letter is raised, through singing and discussion, at group time. Children have opportunities to write for a purpose, for example when writing cards to people they love. One child perseveres with this and returns several times throughout the day to complete it to his satisfaction. Another child writes inside the card demonstrating a good awareness of the letters that make up her name.

Children generally behave very well and respond promptly to requests, for example, to tidy up. Staff give clear explanations about their expectations, for example, the need to wear aprons when painting; 'to keep your clothes clean'. They explain why it is important to be gentle with each other and children are helped to resolve problems about sharing for themselves. This helps them to develop good skills for the future.

Staff provide children with learning experiences based on practical, exploratory play and the majority of the children's day is spent in freely chosen activities with support from staff. Children use this time to access the activities set out, or select from the accessible storage. They use potatoes to make prints on paper. They confidently ask for more paint which they squeeze onto the sponge and then become engrossed exploring the feel of this on their hands. They become very busy as they assemble what they need to take the buggies and dolls on a visit to the shops, dressing in a variety of outfits. They make themselves a drink in the home area and wash up their cup afterwards. A whole group time is organised for the end of the session. Whilst most children listen to a story being read to them or participate in discussion about the weather, this group activity is not organised sufficiently well to ensure all children are actively engaged and suitably challenged.

Children's welfare is well supported and promoted. Children enjoy cereal, toast and fruit at snack time and ask for fruit if they are hungry later. Drinks are readily available and children independently pour their own milk or use a water dispenser when thirsty. Children and staff sit together to eat their packed lunches, provided by parents. Through this children develop important skills in managing the contents of their lunch box with increasing independence. They enjoy this sociable time as they talk with staff and their peers. Good hygiene procedures are followed. Children become confident in following hygienic practices, such as using the soap dispenser when washing their hands. Children are taught to keep themselves and others safe and to care for the environment. For example, they assist in tidying toys away when they have finished using them, and know that if they run indoors they must be careful to avoid bumping others. Children are active, inquisitive learners as a result of the accessible environment provided by staff. They are beginning to understand the wider world through activities associated with a range of different cultures. They experience regular exploratory walks round a local farm to discover the animal and plant life, help feed the animals, take part in seasonal activities, and play in the big barn.

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?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	2

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	2
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding	2
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	2
The effectiveness of partnerships	2
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	2

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	2
The extent to which children feel safe	2
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	2
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	2

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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