

Acorns Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number EY341932
Inspection date 27/09/2010
Inspector ISP Inspection

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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

Acorns Day Nursery is situated on the ground floor of a large house, close to the centre of Exeter. It opened in 1996, and re-registered under the ownership of SPL Education Limited in 2006. It is one of a chain of three nurseries which is linked with St Peter's Preparatory School. There are four playrooms, a sleep room, kitchen, toilets, office and staff facilities, as well two enclosed outdoor play areas. The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register to care for up to 40 children, There are currently 101 children on roll. The nursery is open from 7.45am to 6:15pm on weekdays, throughout the year. There are 18 staff members, 15 of whom have appropriate child care qualifications, including the manager who is working towards achieving the Early Years Professional Status. The staff team is supported by two chefs and a cleaner.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

The staff team work very cohesively and are exceptionally well led and managed, which ensures that they are highly motivated, committed and extremely confident in implementing the Early Years Foundation Stage. Children's progress in their learning and development is rigorously monitored within a fully inclusive setting. Robust self-evaluation and a strong vision for the future ensures that the highest standards are achieved, which positively impacts on their capacity to make continual improvements which greatly benefit children. Children's individual needs are particularly well known and met due to the nursery understanding the vital importance in working with parents, outside agencies and other settings, which is hugely successful.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- review the procedure to follow if there are allegations against staff to ensure clarity

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Safeguarding children is given the highest priority by the management team, who check staff's knowledge at interview and arrange regular in-house training sessions to ensure all staff's knowledge is excellent. The designated person for safeguarding regularly attends external safeguarding training which is duly cascaded to the staff team. This ensures that staff routinely record children's

existing injuries and are aware of the procedures to follow if they have any concerns about children in their care, as well as excellent relationships with outside agencies. However, the procedure to follow if there are allegations against staff is not clear. Robust recruitment and induction procedures ensures that staff are suitable to work with children. The premises are very secure as visitors need to ring the bell on the outside door before being admitted into the hallway. Only qualified staff open the door to visitors, who check their reason for visiting and ID, as required, before signing them into the visitor's book and escorting them into the nursery. Risk assessments are comprehensively completed for both the premises and individual outings, where set procedures ensure that a ratio of 1:2 is used outside the premises and that all parental consents are in place. Staff are aware to record any issues and report their concerns to the member of staff with responsibility for health and safety, who has attended specific training. Systems for recording the attendance of children, staff and visitors is robust as is the monitoring of the administering of medication and recording of minor accidents, which are appropriately treated, as nearly all the staff hold a valid first aid certificate.

The nursery management team and staff all have strong, positive ideas for future improvement, which includes improving babies access to the front garden area which they would like to develop as well as training in forest school. Staff are encouraged to attend ongoing training, visit other settings to identify ways to improve and are confident to share their thoughts and ideas either at team meetings, on a one to one basis or via the staff questionnaire. This ensures that they feel fully involved, motivated and appreciated which results in a low turnover of staff and a consistent keyperson for children. The manager has addressed the recommendations from the previous inspection and has taken onboard comments from early years consultants. The nursery's self-evaluation includes information from the staff team, parents and children in order to successfully evaluate their practice and continually strive for the highest standards for children.

Parents only have positive things to say about the nursery and the warm and welcoming staff team who ensure that their children have a fun learning experience and that their individual needs are well known and met. They are actively encouraged to develop a two-way flow of communication which leads to exceptionally positive relationships. They have full access to the nursery's policies and procedures and supportive information for each stage of their child's development. For example, staff print out information on weaning, dummies, potty training and biting in order to reassure parents. In addition, they have promoted healthy eating by inviting parents to join them in making healthy cakes and organised a session on mark making to reassure parents and inform them about the early stages of writing. Staff are also very pro-active in building strong links with other providers through attending cluster meetings, inviting them to in-house training events and through the completion of a partnership form, which hugely benefits children's care and learning.

Staff have created a cosy, welcoming and stimulating environment for children. Staff ratios ensure children are well supported as they move freely between inside and outdoors. Staff make excellent use of available space to ensure that babies have toys and equipment laid out for ease of access and older children select toys

freely from low-level storage. This encourages them to make choices and become independent. Inclusion and diversity is firmly embedded within all aspects of the nursery, so that books, displays, signs and toys reflect children's culture and equipment and additional resources and training are sought to ensure that all children's individual needs are met. For example, some staff are booked on sign language training to further children's communication skills. Children benefit from parents and visitors who increase their understanding of the local community through explaining their jobs or teaching children nursery rhymes in another language.

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

Children are very happy and settled within the homely nursery where there is a good balance of child initiated and adult led activities. They are confident to explore all aspects of the exciting learning environment and persist for some time at activities of their choosing. Babies enjoy looking at books with the caring staff and listening to the animal sounds when buttons are pressed. Babies giggle when staff pretend to feed a teddy and open their mouth delightedly for more food. Children relish the outdoor area where they practise their balance and physical skills as they step onto the wooden stumps with confidence. They learn to problem solve as they start by gathering dry sand in their hands, then use a spoon to transport it into a pot. Children show their increasing knowledge and understanding of the wider world when they excitedly state that they are 'putting on my goggles cos I'm turning on the machine and it's dangerous'. They take great delight in digging in the mud looking for treasure and exploring the chocolate smelling brown playdough as they roll it and cut it into shapes. They are confident communicators who are developing essential skills for the future.

Staff skilfully encourage children to think and respond through the use of open ended questions and supportive interaction. They routinely observe children's play and record their achievements in their celebration book, which is linked to the six areas of learning, and builds on what children already know. Each child's learning and progress is closely monitored by their keyperson and the manager, who uses the national strategy 'Progress Matters' to plot children's achievements. Through observation and monitoring, staff are able to quickly identify any children who need additional support and act on this immediately. Staff are very positive role models who speak kindly and gently to the children and encourage sharing and consideration. Children are respected as individuals and praised and encouraged often, which raises their confidence and self-esteem. As a result, children's behaviour is exemplary.

Children are safe within the care of a consistent staff team. They are vigilant at ensuring the security and safety of the premises, the suitability of equipment and resources as well as ensuring that children are closely supervised. Staff use a baby alarm to monitor sleeping children, as well as checking on them every ten minutes and recording this on a chart. The whole nursery regularly practises the emergency evacuation routine to ensure that the staff and children can get out safely. Older

children have been involved in risk assessments and are learning to keep themselves safe through wearing reflective wrist bands and vests and discussions on road safety when going on outings. Children's health is exceptionally well promoted through the broad range of healthy foods which are rotated on a four week menu plan. They enjoy home made food, such as, spaghetti and meatballs, roast chicken, fish pie and leek and potato soup, as well as, butternut squash muffins, lemon and raisin scones, malt loaf and fruit kebabs. Babies are offered water regularly and older children can access this independently. All children have lots of space indoors and outside to move freely as they practise their gross motor skills. They routinely wash their hands before eating and after using the toilet. Staff use hygienic practices when changing nappies, such as, wearing disposable aprons and gloves and ensuring the changing mat is sprayed and wiped between use. There is clear information for parents on contagious illnesses and exclusion periods to ensure that children are appropriately protected from the risk of cross infection.

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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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