

The Acorn Nursery School

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector	Christine Clint
Setting address	Cranleigh Infant School, Church Lane, Cranleigh, Surrey, GU6 8AR
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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 Acorn Nursery School opened in 1990. It operates from within the grounds of Cranleigh Primary School Lower, in the village of Cranleigh in Surrey. Children have sole use of an external, purpose built classroom with cloakroom and toilet facilities; the nursery also use other adjacent school rooms. There is a secure all weather outside play area with a large canopy for shelter. The nursery serves the local and surrounding area.

There are currently 48 children on roll, from two years to the end of the early years age group. The nursery provides funded educational places for children aged three and four years old. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The nursery supports children who have special educational needs and /or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery is open five days a week during school term time. Flexible session times are available throughout the week, organised according to children's age. Eight staff work with the children, including the manager. All staff have early years qualification and an extra staff member is a trainee. The setting receives support from the local early years network.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

The nursery has very accomplished and well organised leadership and management with a dedicated and cohesive staff team. All staff show a professional attitude and a high level of knowledge and understanding of children's development. The nursery has developed excellent systems to involve and promote key worker responsibilities with very successful results. Self evaluation is effectively used across all areas of the provision, and especially to meet the needs of parents and to promote children's individual progress. All areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage are efficiently met, and the provider shows a proactive and keen approach to increasing the quality of the provision.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- including evidence of checks undertaken for medical suitability

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The nursery has very strong leadership and management, with a committed focus on managing children's individual welfare. A full range of policies and procedures are in place and these entirely promote children's safety. The premises are very secure and there are well organised systems to lock the gates when parents have delivered children, with an extra alarm on the main entrance to alert staff. There are high ratios of staff to children and dedicated levels of continuity. Staff continue to attend training; they maintain and update their knowledge and awareness. Clear documentation is available to show that staff suitability is verified and this includes a verbal discussion about health, although no evidence is recorded about the medical suitability of staff employed. The nursery has well written procedures for child protection, which are shared with parents. Staff are experienced and clearly know the procedures for referral.

The nursery has detailed records of risk assessments that identify and minimise all hazards. These are included in the register and checked daily, with extra details recorded about any repairs required on the premises and records show when these are completed. The nursery has included risks on outings and these are updated annually. The provider is fully aware of the nursery's responsibility to record and show the actions taken if there are any complaints. Regular fire evacuation is practised with the whole school and fire equipment is fully maintained on an annual basis, with extra checks for electrical equipment. There are detailed records of children's accidents and the treatment provided. All regulations regarding medication are followed and recorded and the nursery displays information about contagious diseases, ensuring that parents are fully informed to minimise the spread of infection.

The nursery resources are exceptionally well planned and arranged in areas for children to access independently. There are fully equipped areas of focused provision to encourage children's learning through play, and different activities are included in the outdoor area to complement and reflect the areas of learning. The nursery has improved the secure outdoor area by providing a staged, deck area which is under a canopy and shelters children from the rain or the direct sun. There are well resourced topics to reflect diversity and these include celebrating other festivals and special events. Children have inspiring opportunities to learn about the wider world through topics, through their science equipment, through interactive toys and the well supported needs of individual children. They are fully encouraged to understand and accept each other's differences, and they show very effectively how they respond to individual needs.

The provider and staff show a strong and proactive involvement with all areas of the provision, and this is shown in the clear self-evaluation process. This has enabled the nursery to continue to drive improvement and show plans for the future. Information from parent's questionnaires enables the nursery to decide and plan events; the newly established dialogue through emailing encourages many parents to respond and have regular liaison with the management. The nursery has also implemented all requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage since

the last inspection, and children's progress and development is comprehensively monitored. Staff show high levels of awareness and understanding of their key children's learning. They very successfully record children's achievements in the learning journals and use their knowledge to plan activities individually during the session to promote children's next steps.

There are committed and well-supported partnerships in place with parents, who say that they "cannot speak highly enough of the provision". Many parents have attended over the years with several children and show total satisfaction with all areas of children's learning and progress. They volunteer to help and bring their expertise, extending opportunities for variety and encouraging learning. Parents complete all the regulatory requirements and permission, and they also ensure that staff are fully informed about their children's level of capabilities, frequently linking with records of ongoing learning and taking children's records of development home regularly. The nursery has established close links with the immediate school on site, and with other local schools there are well-organised and planned routines in place for children who transfer. There are strong connections with the church and the wider community; the nursery welcomes professionals to visit, and this encourages children's understanding of their environment. There is very close liaison with professional agencies and the nursery closely follows individual learning plans to ensure progress and support for children with special education needs; they liaise with other nurseries and plan with parents for children's future progress.

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

Children enter with total enthusiasm; they show complete confidence in knowing the routines of the morning and they settle immediately with staff and other children. They are clearly focused on taking part in the group registration time and listen attentively to answer the register, saying good morning and eagerly taking part in the morning welcome song. The animated interaction at group time fully encourages children to focus and participate because staff are accomplished and include a high level of spontaneous interaction with children, making good eye contact and using children's names effectively. They count together, and children immediately recognise that when another child arrives this has altered the overall numbers. Children know the day, date and month; they take turns to be the monitor and to point at the calendar. They talk about the weather, recognising and describing whether it is different to yesterday - they all agree it is the same. Children are keen to celebrate when it is a birthday and staff include opportunities to sing and blow out the candles, raising individual children's confidence and self-esteem.

Children are excited to hear about the new equipment and talk about this together, looking at different items the nursery manager has purchased. They remember meaningful words, for example "dynamo" to describe wind-up torches, they know that the new globe represents the world and they can see other countries. Children show interest and have clear explanations about the new resources because these

are linked with the planned activities. For example, children are shown the magic milk bottles for the dolls, which staff explain could be part of their circus activity. Children listen attentively and show a clear understanding when staff explain about some items being half price - they swiftly respond and know that half of £10 is £5. Children learn what activities are available during the morning and they know that they have freedom and independent choice to move between the available resources. They are very happy to prolong the group time and ask about showing items they have brought from home; they are eager to share information and are inquisitive about learning about each other's belongings. They remember stories and name Rapunzel instantly because of her long hair, transferring their thoughts to other activities later and making a fully painted, tall castle at the junk modelling table which they say is the tower for Rapunzel.

Children are praised for their efforts and for their achievements throughout the session. Older children are presented with stars at group time when they have learned to read at home, and children show delight when they are instantly awarded stars during the session for managing their own personal care. All staff show very high levels of valuing children through understanding their feelings and recognising their individual progress. This creates a very positive atmosphere of communication and children learn through these simple and effective examples. The frequent and well managed group times during the session encourages children's sense of belonging and builds strong relationships with staff and each other. Children also learn about nursery rules at circle time and this increases their understanding of safety; through listening to stories and taking part in role play children are increasing their awareness of staying safe and understanding right and wrong. They take part in fire drills with the whole school and learn about safety in the community through visiting fire and police officers.

Children's awareness of health and hygiene is very regularly included and promoted. They all take part in the snack bar routines and show a clear interest when fruit is being prepared. They eat and drink healthily, trying new foods and managing their own routines for toileting and hand washing. Children fully enjoy taking part in growing their own vegetables in the garden and they have a wide variety successfully planted and growing well. The garden is strongly supported, managed and maintained by parents to enable children to taste their own produce. Children eagerly take part in physical exercise everyday, they carry out actions to songs and learn to move rhythmically, they follow instructions and show enthusiasm for taking part. They are motivated and active during outdoor play, riding on scooters and pushing each other in cars. Children learn about the dangers of too much sun through wearing hats and using protective cream in hot weather.

There is excellent evidence to show that children are flourishing across all areas of development and especially in developing their skills for the future. Older children are confidently writing their own names instantly and younger children have a wide variety of opportunities to encourage this. They practise making patterns and letter shapes in the shaving foam, they use clip boards at the junk modelling table to encourage written planning, they make patterns in the sand and they use chalks. Children constantly see staff members making notes and they understand from the start that text carries meaning because they self register and use their own name

cards at snack time. Children show competence in using the mouse when playing computer games, and they are very aware of using the timers to measure how long they can spend on the computer. They create challenge for interactive travelling toys and use planks to show how these can climb a slope. Children count frequently with staff and learn about quantity when they balance the cups and saucers on top of each other. Staff include new words for example, guessing and estimating, to describe and extend children's understanding. Children also practise the skills of cooking, learning about ingredients and words that explain different processes. All children take part in short planned activities in age related groups and this involves identifying the life cycle of a frog. They show precise understanding and accurate ability in cutting, sticking and writing as well as recognising and understanding the pictures.

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