



*Rhagoriaeth i bawb – Excellence for all*

Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg  
a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru

Her Majesty's Inspectorate  
for Education and Training in Wales

**A report on**

**Acorns ONS Nursery**

**Office for National Statistics**

**Government Buildings**

**Newport**

**NP10 1XG**

**Date of inspection: March 2011**

**By**

**Elizabeth Mayo**

**For**

**Estyn, Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education**

**and Training in Wales**

During each inspection, inspectors aim to answer three key questions:

**Key Question 1: How good are the outcomes?**

**Key Question 2: How good is provision?**

**Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?**

Inspectors also provide an overall judgement on the school's current performance and on its prospects for improvement.

In these evaluations, inspectors use a four-point scale:

<b>Judgement</b>	<b>What the judgement means</b>
<b>Excellent</b>	Many strengths, including significant examples of sector-leading practice
<b>Good</b>	Many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement
<b>Adequate</b>	Strengths outweigh areas for improvement
<b>Unsatisfactory</b>	Important areas for improvement outweigh strengths

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## About the setting

Acorns ONS Nursery is an English-medium setting which serves staff employed in the Office for National Statistics (ONS), Newport. The setting is one of eleven nurseries in South Wales and the South of England owned by Acorns Nurseries Limited.

The setting meets in a purpose built nursery in ONS grounds and serves an urban area. The children who attend are considered to come mainly from advantaged backgrounds. All registered children have English as their home language. Eight per cent of the registered children have additional learning needs.

The setting is open from 8am to 6pm, Monday to Friday for 52 weeks of the year. It is registered for 35 children in total and admits children from the age of six weeks.

At the time of the inspection, 12 children between the ages of three and four were registered and funded by the Early Years Partnership. Seven children were present during the inspection.

The setting was last inspected by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate for Wales (CSSIW) in February 2011. It is the setting's first inspection by Estyn.

## Summary

<b>The setting's current performance</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>The setting's prospects for improvement</b>	<b>Good</b>

### Current performance

The setting is good because:

- all children make good progress and achieve well;
- children are involved in a wide range of stimulating learning experiences;
- children are happy to come to the setting, enjoy learning and are well behaved;
- there are warm, caring relationships between children and staff; and
- the quality of most teaching is good.

### Prospects for improvement

The prospects for improvement are good because:

- staff, managers and directors have positive attitudes towards improvement;
- there is evidence that improvements have been made and sustained over time;
- there are sufficient resources to meet identified priorities; and
- self- evaluation is effective in bringing about improvements.

## Recommendations

The recommendations for improvement are to:

R1. Ensure that learners' activities match more closely the needs of all children, particularly the more able.

R2. Effectively plan and further develop continuous provision for outdoor learning.

R3. Further develop assessment strategies so that it is used more effectively to inform the next steps in children's learning.

R4. Further develop transition links with local schools.

### ***What happens next?***

The setting will produce an action plan that shows how it will address the recommendations.

## Main findings

<b>Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?</b>
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<b>Good</b>
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### **Standards: Good**

Most children achieve well and make significant progress in relation to their starting points across all the Foundation Phase areas of learning. Most demonstrate good levels of knowledge and understanding across the areas of learning in line with their age and stage of development. They cope well with new and challenging activities. Many children are confident learners who are prepared to take risks, learn from mistakes and explore their surroundings.

All children apply their skills well to a wide range of play activities. Most have good communication skills and talk eagerly about their experiences. Nearly all join in with songs enthusiastically, enjoy listening to stories and sharing books with adults. Many also show an interest in writing and frequently take opportunities to mark make in role play areas and when making maps of a 'Ticw hunt'. Most recognise their own name

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and self register by placing their name on the appropriate display area. Many try to write their own name, for example, when creating a picture or painting.

Children make good progress in the development of early mathematical skills. All children are able to count confidently to ten. All count objects accurately to five and most also to ten. Most recognise shapes and use mathematical language, such as, 'underneath', 'behind' or 'above' correctly when going on a Ticw hunt. Most use electronic toys with understanding and play games on a computer independently.

Nearly all children show good levels of independence for their age and stage of development. Most are keen to experiment with a range of techniques and materials to create pictures and objects and play imaginatively in role play areas.

Children make good progress in gaining skills in the Welsh language. Most understand simple questions and phrases. Many use words such as colours or numbers and a few use Welsh to describe the weather. Many use Welsh spontaneously in their play.

**Wellbeing: Good**

Standards of wellbeing are good. Children settle well when entering the setting and quickly become interested in activities. They have positive attitudes to new experiences. Many have an appropriate understanding for their age and stage of development of the importance of eating healthily and exercising. They enjoy sharing breakfast, lunch and afternoon tea together, eating a wide range of healthy food prepared for them. Children help to serve each other with mugs of water. Most are aware of the need to wash their hands before eating or after using the toilet.

Behaviour is good. Children are polite to each other and adults. Most take turns, share toys and cooperate well, for example, when planting tomato plants in the garden and going on a 'Ticw hunt'. Nearly all children are confident to ask for help from adults. Children help to plan activities for the setting through 'thought showers' and participate enthusiastically in activities.

<b>Key Question 2: How good is provision?</b>	<b>Good</b>
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**Learning experiences: Adequate**

The setting provides all children with a broad range of stimulating, appealing activities across all areas of learning, which stimulate, engage and challenge most children to learn effectively.

Planned activities are based on the Foundation Phase Child Development Profile and Skills Framework. Activities effectively develop communication, numeracy, ICT and

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wider learning skills. Practitioners know children well and respond appropriately to children's varying needs, abilities and interests. However, activities are not always planned in enough detail to meet the specific needs of individual children especially the more able and talented.

The setting makes good use of visitors and visits to stimulate and extend children's learning experiences. Continuous provision for outdoor learning is not always well planned. As a result, children's experiential learning and ability to take risks is limited. Practitioners develop children's Welsh language skills well. The language, culture and traditions of Wales are supported by visits, displays, signs and celebrations.

The setting encourages children to save energy and water and to recycle paper. Food left at meal times is added to the compost bin. Children help to maintain the setting's vegetable garden and are encouraged to conserve energy at home through Eco Baby stickers.

### **Teaching: Good**

The quality of teaching is good. Practitioners are aware of the learning intentions for activities and have a secure knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Phase. They use a range of approaches to stimulate play and active learning experiences which children clearly enjoy. Adults give children enough time to complete a task or develop an idea. They intervene appropriately and sensitively when needed. Practitioners encourage children to make choices and use questioning to develop children's thinking skills. Teaching is most successful when practitioners challenge children effectively.

The quality of assessment is adequate. Practitioners provide children with helpful oral feedback as they learn. Practitioners, however, do not always plan time for children to tell each other what they have found out to check if the learning intentions have been achieved. Although children's progress and wellbeing are tracked across the areas of learning, the information gained is not always used effectively to plan the next steps in children's learning. Parents or carers are given the opportunity to talk about their children's progress and wellbeing twice a year, receive a written annual report and a portfolio of progress when children leave the setting. Practitioners make time before and after sessions to be available for parents or carers.

### **Care, support and guidance: Good**

Effective arrangements are in place to support children's health and wellbeing. These procedures contribute well to children's general development and support their learning effectively. Learning experiences promote children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Children are happy and secure happy in the setting and are willing to ask for help and support. The setting identifies children's learning needs when they join and

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ensures that these needs are met. There are good procedures for the support of all children with additional learning needs. Practitioners work closely with specialists employed by Acorns Nurseries and by the local authority (LA) to ensure that all children's needs are met.

There are good arrangements for children joining the setting and close links are established with younger groups in the Nursery. However, transition links with local schools to which children transfer are not developed enough. The setting has an appropriate policy and procedures for safeguarding. All practitioners receive relevant training and understand their roles and responsibilities. The setting has a good range of policies and appropriate risk assessments to ensure children's safety during sessions.

**Learning environment: Good**

The setting provides a welcoming environment for the children. Colourful displays include children's work and photographs of their activities. The setting is fully inclusive ensuring all children have equal access to all areas. Practitioners encourage children to respect and celebrate diversity through a wide range of activities and resources.

There are an extensive range of high- quality resources which meet the needs of all children in every area of learning. Where appropriate, resources are matched to children's additional learning needs. The setting is an attractive, stimulating learning environment. The very well maintained accommodation is used well.

The setting employs enough qualified practitioners to meet the needs of all children. They have an appropriate knowledge of the Foundation Phase and are committed to improving their knowledge, understanding and skills through relevant training.

<b>Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?</b>	<b>Good</b>
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**Leadership: Good**

Leaders and directors have a clear sense of purpose and vision for improvement. Practitioners create a very positive ethos where staff and children are valued and respected. The setting has clear policies and aims which are understood and implemented well by all practitioners. Directors are actively involved in determining the strategic direction of the setting. Leaders and directors have high expectations of themselves and the staff.

There is a strong, developing culture of self-improvement amongst practitioners which helps to develop and maintain the good work of the setting. Leaders respond well to advice and support, ensuring that children make good progress in their learning and wellbeing. Leaders and directors use relevant information about the



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setting well. They have a clear understanding of their role and work together effectively to deliver the Foundation Phase. Good appraisal processes ensures continuous improvement in the quality of provision.

Practitioners respond well to local and national priorities and are fully involved in training and developments connected with the Foundation Phase. The setting has begun working towards achievement of the ECO Schools Award.

**Improving quality: Good**

The setting has good processes to evaluate its strengths and areas for development. It regularly consults parents and carers about aspects of the provision. Practitioners make time to listen to children's views and reflect together with leaders and directors to identify issues for further improvement. The setting's self-evaluation report is a useful document which links appropriately with the targets for improvement identified in action plans.

Practitioners have developed links with practitioners in other Acorns settings and have made good use of Foundation Phase training. They respond to recommendations made by LA advisers and other specialists to improve assessment, creative activities, outdoor provision and Welsh language development. Practitioners give presentations, where applicable, to staff in other Acorns settings.

**Partnership working: Good**

A good range of partnerships contribute positively to children's progress and wellbeing. The setting has good relationships with the parents of children in their care. Results from the pre-inspection questionnaire and discussions with parents show that parents are very satisfied with the care and the learning experiences provided for their children. However, a few report that they do not feel well informed about their child's progress or the range of activities provided for children.

Partnership links between the setting and local schools are not developed enough. The LA Foundation Phase advisory teachers work effectively with the setting and practitioners value the support they receive. Community links are used effectively to support children's learning and imaginative play.

**Resource management: Good**

The setting has a good range of high quality resources which contribute effectively to children's learning and the acquisition of new skills. Practitioners are used efficiently and make a significant contribution to the progress made by all children. Resources are regularly reviewed to ensure that they are meeting the needs of children in their care. The directors and managers have a good understanding of their budget and

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ensure that financial decisions are evaluated. The setting provides good value for money.

## **Appendix 1**

### **Stakeholder satisfaction report**

#### **Responses to parent questionnaires**

Eleven questionnaires were received. All parents feel their child is happy and safe in the setting. A few parents do not feel well informed about their child's progress or the range of activities offered. All are comfortable about approaching the setting with questions, suggestions or problems.

#### **Responses to discussions with children**

Children say they enjoy coming to the setting and seeing their friends. They know who they can talk to if they are worried or unhappy.

## Appendix 2

### The reporting inspector

Elizabeth Mayo	Reporting Inspector
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### Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the setting and from the Estyn website ([www.estyn.gov.uk](http://www.estyn.gov.uk))