

Acorn At The Willows

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspection date

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Inspector

Sheena Bankier

Setting address

The Willows School & Early Learning Centre, Newlyn Place,
Fishermead, MILTON KEYNES, MK6 2LP

Telephone number

01908 690582

Email

willows@acornchildcare.co.uk

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

Acorn at The Willows Nursery and Out Of School Club registered in 2010. The nursery is part of Acorn Childcare which operates a total of eight nurseries along with other childcare facilities including out of school clubs and creches in Milton Keynes and Northamptonshire. The nursery operates from purpose-built premises attached to The Willows School and Early Years Centre in the Fishermead area of Milton Keynes.

The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register and both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. A total of 67 children under eight may attend the facility at any one time, with a maximum of 40 children in the Early Years age group. There are currently 45 children on roll in the early years age group. The nursery is open each weekday from 8.00am to 6.00pm all year round. It offers a variety of sessions including "wrap-around" care for children who attend the school and early years centre, including before and after school and school holidays. Children attend from the local and surrounding communities. Children have access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area, which is shared with the school.

There are currently nine full time staff working with the children, of these seven hold recognised early years qualifications ranging from level two to Early Years Professional Status. Three staff are currently working towards furthering their qualifications. A teacher works with the children two mornings a week.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Effective self-evaluation leads to ongoing improvements that benefit children and families. Observation, planning and assessment systems are strong and actively support children's good progress. Practices and procedures are mainly consistent to promote successful inclusion and partnerships with parents. The nursery has good communication and works very soundly with others involved in children's care and education. Children's good health, safety and wellbeing are effectively considered.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- encourage parents to review their children's progress regularly and contribute to their child's learning and development record
- consider developing further children's strong sense of self as a member of the nursery.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Robust recruitment procedures support the effective safeguarding of children. Staff demonstrate a good understanding of their responsibilities to children's welfare and undertake training in safeguarding, for example, as part of their induction. Children develop their understanding of safety through clear boundaries and positive behaviour reinforcements, such as, using 'our walking feet inside'. The nursery promotes children's good health through maintaining a clean, hygienic environment. They gain good information that enables them to manage children's health needs effectively.

Staff have clearly defined roles and responsibilities which results in successful team working. Staff, parents and children contributions to the nursery self-evaluation are valued. The manager regularly monitors staff practice and the provision with a good range of strategies. She works 'hands on' within the nursery, which provides a good role model to the staff. Staff undertake further training to extend their professional development. The nursery successfully reviews and reflects on its provision, which drives improvements effectively and leads to the active implementation of continuous improvements. For example, the introduction of forest school sessions to enhance children's learning in the outdoor environment.

Parents, children and visitors benefit from a welcoming environment and atmosphere. Resources are of a good quality and are easily accessible to the children. This supports children's independent play choices. Photographs alongside children's names provide children with a sense of belonging at the nursery, for example, by children's pegs. Newer children do not always have a photograph or name labels organised to underpin their sense of self as a member of the nursery. Staff mostly have a good understanding of children's individual backgrounds. In particular the children's key person, who spends time with children and their parents as part of the effective settling in process.

The nursery works closely with other professionals. This strongly supports children who speak English as an additional language and children with special educational needs. The nursery effectively implements the advice and support they receive to meet children's individual needs consistently. The effective partnerships the nursery forms results in continuity in children's care and learning. Parents benefit from good information, such as, newsletters and notices on display. They receive regular verbal feedback about their child's time at the nursery. Parents speak very positively about the nursery, and are clearly happy with the care and learning experiences their children receive.

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

Effective settling in procedures take into account children's individual needs and the nursery tailors visits to these. Children form good relationships with the staff and other children. This enables children to settle well at the nursery. Consistent routines provide a familiar pattern to children's days. Staff support children's good understanding of these, for example, by discussing with children that it will be snack time soon. Children take an active role in caring for the environment, such as, tidying up. Staff manage behaviour consistently and calmly. They are good role models to the children, for example, they use and encourage good manners. There is ongoing warm praise and encouragement for children. This increases children's self-esteem and confidence.

Good planning systems promote children's learning and development effectively. Staff undertake regular observations that feed into the short term planning. This results in children making good progress in relation to their starting points. Parents are aware that records of children's progress are in place, most parents have not reviewed their children's progress or contributed to their records. Staff demonstrate a good understanding of children as individuals, such as, likes and interests and take these into account when planning activities and themes. This enables the nursery to build successfully on children's interests and ideas, such as, extending topics that children demonstrate a keen interest in.

Children benefit from good interaction with staff, who support their active participation in activities and learning experiences. Children enjoy exploring and investigating different materials, such as, sand and water. Children benefit from regular times throughout the day to sing songs and rhymes. They enjoy looking at books and listen to these being read by staff. Children benefit from activities to promote their mark making and early writing skills. For example, the younger children use paint with objects and their hands, and the older children are able to access a good range of resources, such as, pens, pencils, rulers, and tape. This effectively underpins children's communication, language and literacy development. Staff use daily experiences to consolidate children's mathematical understanding, for example, counting the number of children going in or out of the garden, and encouraging children to match stickers they choose. This enables children to develop good skills for the future.

All children benefit from plenty of fresh air as they regularly use the outdoor areas and go on local outings, such as, visiting the nearby shop to choose and buy fruit. This increases their knowledge and understanding of the world and promotes a good sense of community. Children challenge their physical skills due to the stimulating outdoor area. Children learn to play safely outside, for example, to put their arms out to balance. Children and staff follow consistent hygiene routines that effectively minimise the potential spread of infection. Meals and snacks are prepared and cooked freshly on the premises and are healthy, well balanced and nutritious. Children benefit from social meal and snack times with staff sitting with them. They increase and develop their independent skills, such as, the older children pouring their own drinks and serving themselves food. The younger

children develop skills, for example, learning to feed themselves, and develop self-care skills, such as, cleaning their faces after meals.

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