

Acorn Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector Angela Scollen

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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

Acorn Nursery is a workplace nursery located in a Ministry of Defence building and is part of the Bright Horizons Family Solutions company. It opened in 2004 and operates from two main base rooms. It is situated in central London and is for the use of parents employed within the building. A maximum of 38 children may attend the nursery at any one time. It is open each weekday throughout the year and sessions are from 8am to 6pm for 51 weeks of the year. There is no outdoor play facility at the building itself. Outdoor experiences are offered through the use of local parks, walks and visits to places of interest. The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register and both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. There are currently 49 children on roll, all in the early years age range. Children aged three years receive funding for early education. The nursery currently supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. It also supports a number of children who learn English as an additional language. The nursery employs 13 members of staff who all hold appropriate early years qualifications.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children's learning and development is supported exceedingly well overall through the staff team's secure understanding of each child's individual needs and interests. Children's safety is paramount. Excellent partnerships with parents support and extend the quality of care so children are fully supported during transition between home and nursery. Children have access to a stimulating environment which encourages their confidence to enjoy and achieve independently. Overall, the staff team undertakes a wide range of training to update their skills and reflect on their practice, which results in positive ongoing improvement to the service they provide. Partnerships with other professionals and local schools are effective in helping meet children's needs.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- improve further children's ability to gain skills for the future by extending early mark making opportunities for the youngest children and to engage children more effectively as active learners when outdoors
- extend self-evaluation systems by involving all staff more effectively in order to identify where practice needs improvement to better meet children's needs.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Staff place children's safety and welfare at the heart of all they do. Extensive policies and procedures underpin staff practices so that children are safeguarded exceptionally well. The staff team fully understands the procedures to follow if concerns arise. There are rigorous vetting procedures in place for all staff prior to undertaking employment to check they are suitable to work with children. All staff undertake first aid and safeguarding training, and documentation reflects that procedures are followed meticulously. The staff team recognises the absolute importance of remaining vigilant during the regular outings. They undertake risk assessments indoors and outside extremely effectively to identify and minimise potential hazards. Risk assessment records are very well organised and maintained. Children are encouraged by the staff team to consider potential hazards themselves through use of highly effective strategies, such as a 'safety teddy'.

Evaluation of, the provision is effective and continuously adapts what is offered, so learning and development opportunities for children improve. For example, the pre-school room is restructured to meet the needs of a younger group of children with more space available to explore and play. Overall, the staff team has a good commitment towards driving improvement, with recommendations set at the previous inspection met. However, not all staff are sufficiently motivated to become knowledgeable about, and fully involved in, the evaluation process to identify where practice needs improving, for example, in developing mark making. The staff team has access to useful internal and external training courses to develop their professional skills and meet the needs of the children and families. Excellent parent partnerships capture parents' feedback, which informs evaluation and drives a shared vision to continuously develop the provision. For example, there is a new parent forum and parents value the weekly emails and newsletters they receive. Children access an exciting range of resources and equipment. These are used well to support their individual interests, so many children progress extremely well from their starting points.

Positive staff interactions and thoughtful planning mean equality and diversity is effective and embedded to support positive learning and development for all children. The provision is inclusive with resources equally available to all children covering a wide range of interests and needs. For example, an audio book created by parents celebrates children's varying backgrounds. Children share special objects with each other that reflect these, so they gain understanding that families differ. The staff team has instigated strong partnerships working with local schools and outside agencies to promote consistency of care and learning for the children. For example, to support children moving on to school, new teachers are invited into the setting to meet children and parents. Parents are included and involved in their children's learning. For instance, all parents receive a book of activities to reinforce how learning opportunities can be extended at home relating to the six areas of learning. Parent feedback shows they are impressed with the service provided by the staff team and confirms that their children enjoy time spent in the setting. The versatile relationship between the staff team and parents clearly has a significant impact on the children's well-being and development.

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

Children make at least good progress in their learning and development as a result of the staff's knowledge of children's individual needs and interests. For instance staff encourage children to choose their own activities. Children self-select resources competently throughout the daily routine, so they enjoy what they do and are well motivated to learn. They become absorbed in their activities, concentrating extremely well. For instance, coloured water holds the attention of the older children who explore ice making possibilities. Younger children chose to make a train track in the book area, learning to negotiate and take turns. Staff take a flexible approach, following children's interests and helping to develop these. Children engage in role play, for example, and under the encouragement of staff extend their play into other areas of the provision. For example, older children dressing up as 'heroes' become absorbed in exploring fire extinguishers and staff extend their thinking by encouraging them to draw and write down their own superhero stories. Literacy and thinking skills are used effectively as the story and role play is recorded. Staff support stimulates creativity very well. This helps children gain some useful skills for their future lives, but sometimes staff miss opportunities to stimulate early mark making with younger children. Additionally, staff do not always engage some children's attention when outside in the parks. Nevertheless, children are extremely happy and secure as they actively engage in their learning to develop lifelong skills.

Children show an excellent understanding of how to behave. They are very respectful towards the staff and one another. Behaviour management strategies clearly promote children's confidence and self-esteem. Children are encouraged to think about how rules and behaviour impact on others. For instance, a nursery teddy bear is used inventively by the staff team and the children themselves, to reinforce the need to stay safe and think of how others may feel. During a trip to the local park children listen carefully to reminders about how to keep safe whilst exploring a nature trail.

Staff offer good support overall, which allows the children to be actively involved in routines to promote their independence and sense of belonging. Staff provide good role models, so children learn good hygiene routines, which the majority follow independently. Meal times are extremely well planned. These are sociable, calm occasions during which children share healthy food. Strong bonds and communication develop naturally, with children and staff sharing experiences, good humour and evidently enjoying each other's company. Good listening and communication skills are developed during meal time routines. Children enjoy taking on responsibilities, as they self-select food from the healthy menu on offer. Younger children are supported well at meal times to be as independent as possible but with staff making sure they have enough time to eat.

Children extend their numeracy and problem solving skills well during daily routines and play. For instance, staff frequently encourage children to share resources and work out if there will be enough to share with each other. Children care about each other and are encouraged to celebrate each other's achievements and differences. For example, when children undertake their first walking trip to the park, they are unmistakably proud of their achievements. The staff team

encourage children to display their creations and achievements; they record these on a display board, which is seen by parents when they collect their children. Children make good progress overall in developing a range of skills which will aid them in later life. For instance, children are encouraged to dress independently and make decisions to support their language and communication skills. Display boards encourage children to discuss their interests and develop social skills and friendships.

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	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding	1
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	1

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	1
The extent to which children feel safe	1
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