

Acorn Day Nursery

2 Roman Road, Luton, Bedfordshire, LU3 2QT

Inspection date	26/11/2013
Previous inspection date	11/04/2013

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	2
	Previous inspection:	4
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		2
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		2
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		2

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision is good

- Teaching methods are good because all practitioners have a thorough understanding of how children learn through play. They make efficient use of assessments of children in order to plan activities that promote children's good progress in all areas of learning.
- Children become absorbed in activities as these are well planned and securely informed by their current interests. Their interest in stories is of particular note and they are developing a good understanding, and real enjoyment, of all types of books.
- Practitioners work well with parents, taking time to get to know each child. This means that children are secure and develop good relationships with their key person and other practitioners.
- The manager and practitioners are fully committed to improving the setting. They use comprehensive evaluation procedures and carefully prioritise actions. This has contributed to the setting raising the standard of their practice substantially and thus improving children's safety, well-being and development.

It is not yet outstanding because

- Outdoor areas are not always used throughout the year, in order to offer children the maximum learning opportunities.
- Opportunities for children to experiment by making marks and writing are not always optimised in all areas of play.

Information about this inspection

Inspections of registered early years provision are:

- scheduled at least once in every inspection cycle – the current cycle ends on 31 July 2016
- scheduled more frequently where Ofsted identifies a need to do so, for example where provision was previously judged inadequate
- brought forward in the inspection cycle where Ofsted has received information that suggests the provision may not be meeting the legal requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage or where assessment of the provision identifies a need for early inspection
- prioritised where we have received information that the provision is not meeting the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and which suggests children may not be safe
- scheduled at the completion of an investigation into failure to comply with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The provision is also registered on the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. This report includes a judgment about compliance with the requirements of that register.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed activities in all rooms and the outside area.
- The inspector held meetings with the manager and deputy manager of the provision and carried out a joint observation with the manager.
- The inspector looked at children's assessment records and planning documentation.
The inspector checked evidence of suitability and qualifications of practitioners
- working with children, the provider's self-evaluation information and improvement plan.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents and carers spoken to on the day and through their written feedback to the setting.

Inspector

Kelly Eyre

Full report

Information about the setting

Acorn Day Nursery was registered in 2002 and is on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. It is situated in converted residential premises in the Leagrave area of Luton, Bedfordshire. It is managed by a private provider. The nursery serves the local and neighbouring area and is accessible to all children. It operates from four main rooms and there is an enclosed area available for outdoor play.

There are currently 10 staff working directly with the children, all of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 or above. The registered provider, who is also the manager, is a qualified teacher with Early Years Professional Status.

The nursery opens Monday to Friday all year round. Sessions are from 8am to 6pm. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The nursery also runs a holiday club during each school holiday and sessions are from 8am to 6pm. There are currently 60 children attending who are in the early years age group. The nursery receives funding for the provision of free early education for three- and four-year-old children. It supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language. The nursery receives support from the local authority.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

To further improve the quality of the early years provision the provider should:

- enhance the use of the outdoor areas so that these consistently offer children learning opportunities in all areas throughout the year

- extend the opportunities and resources for children to write and make marks during role play and other activities.

Inspection judgements

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend

Children are happy and make good progress in their learning. Since their last inspection, practitioners have attended further training and receive practical support in all areas of their work. This means that teaching techniques are now strong and practitioners have a confident knowledge of the Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage. They have good procedures to gather a wide range of initial information from parents, enabling them to proficiently assess children's starting points. Key persons also use this information to inform the planning and to monitor children's progress. The nursery's good

communication with parents means that they have frequent opportunities to share updates about their children. For example, they meet regularly with their child's key person and also fill in information sheets that detail their child's achievements and progress at home. Parents are supported well in extending their child's learning. For example, regular progress summaries include details and ideas about activities that will help extend children's development. Practitioners support children well in developing the skills they need in order to learn effectively and to achieve. Their well-planned activities mean that children have good opportunities to think further and express their ideas and thoughts. For example, older children enjoy making 'mind maps', where the practitioner introduces a word or concept and the children describe what this means to them, going on to discuss each other's thoughts and ideas and to record these as simple diagrams.

The good use of resources means that children's learning is extended and their enjoyment of books is particularly well promoted. For example, when children choose a favourite story, a practitioner collects the relevant props and makes sure all children understand what each of these is. This enables all of them to actively participate as they hold up the props at the correct time. They eagerly join in as they name the props and illustrations and predict the ending of the story. The children are so enthused by this activity that they go on to use the props to re-tell the story themselves, with some children choosing to read the book independently. Practitioners are vigilant and use children's interests well to help extend their learning. For example, after noting that the babies particularly enjoy playing with wooden animals, practitioners introduce further associated resources. The babies thoroughly enjoy trying to place the animals in a farm building, making their own animal prints and going to look at the setting's fish and tortoise. Children have some good opportunities to make marks and develop early writing skills. For example, they enjoy using water and paint brushes to paint letters on a blackboard. However, writing materials are not always readily available in role play areas and alongside other activities. This means that children are not fully encouraged to experiment by making marks and to develop the use of writing for a purpose. Good interaction from practitioners supports the development of children's language and communication skills. For example, practitioners engage children in discussing topics that they know are of interest to them. Children who use English as a second language are supported well and make good overall progress. Practitioners support them in learning English, using a practical system of picture prompts to encourage the development of vocabulary and to aid early communication.

Practitioners now keep clear records of each session, noting what children have played with and their current interests. This information is actively used to inform the planning of children's next steps and to ensure that their interests are included in the daily planning. Practitioners also monitor children's play to check that they are consistently offered balanced opportunities to play independently and to participate in a wide variety of adult-led activities. Consequently, children take an active part in their own learning, learn to work in partnership with others and are well prepared for school. Children are offered a wide variety of opportunities that promote their physical development. For example, they develop their coordination as they run, jump and skip outside. Thoughtful resources help children feel valued and offer them opportunities to understand others. For example, children love looking at the 'family board', where they point out their own parents and siblings, learn to recognise others and go on to discuss the different family compositions and traditions. Thoughtfully placed resources and well-planned activities also extend

children's interests and learning. For example, practitioners place laminated 'feelings' illustrations around a mirror. Children enjoy looking at themselves as they copy the different expressions. Practitioners then encourage them to discuss the different feelings and help children to draw self-portraits so that they can talk about their own characteristics and feelings.

The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children

The key person system is used well to aid communication and support positive partnership working with families. This helps children to feel secure and they form warm and trusting relationships with practitioners. Children naturally include practitioners in their play and enjoy taking books and toys to share with them, showing that they enjoy their company. Practitioners' good interaction with children encourages them to express their preferences and needs. As a result, they learn how to communicate appropriately and develop a positive approach to their play and learning. Therefore, they are well prepared for the move to school. The learning environment has been completely reviewed by managers and practitioners. It now offers children a wide range of stimulating resources that they access independently and use for a range of purposes. The indoor environment is very well organised and offers children play opportunities that promote all areas of learning. Similarly, the outdoor play areas have been equipped with a wide range of resources, such as, balls, stilts, a mud kitchen, writing materials and role play resources. However, these are not used to the optimum during the winter months, meaning that children's learning is not promoted to the maximum in the outdoor areas.

New children quickly settle as practitioners work well with parents so that they fully understand children's needs and daily routines. These are then accommodated within the daily timetable. For example, babies sleep and feed according to their normal home routine. Children's transitions within the setting are well considered and help to ensure that children are not distressed by the change. Practitioners take children to visit their new room several times, slowly increasing the time period so that children become familiar with their new surroundings. Key persons also write a transition report, ensuring that the new key person is familiar with the child's needs, routines and developmental stages.

Children develop a good understanding of appropriate behaviour as practitioners offer them clear explanations. They are encouraged to consider how their actions and behaviour affect others and to share the toys and resources. Children are supported well in developing their self-care skills. For example, older children help set the table for lunch and then clear their plates away afterwards. Children gain a good awareness of the importance of healthy lifestyles. For example, they participate in a physical exercise session, talking about how this affects them and noting their raised temperatures and heart rates, thus developing their understanding of the effects of exercise. Practical daily routines and ongoing discussions help children understand the importance of good hygiene. For example, as they wash their hands before lunchtime they talk about why they need to wash the germs away. Children are also supported well in developing a good understanding of safety. For example, they learn to use the stairs safely and use tools and implements, such as, scissors and cutlery, safely and competently.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision

Safeguarding arrangements are thorough and are consistently implemented, ensuring that children's welfare is promoted at all times. There are stringent checks to make sure that all practitioners are suitable to work with children. The manager has a thorough understanding of child protection procedures. She ensures that these are always followed and that the nursery works in partnership with all relevant external agencies. There are clear procedures for dealing with allegations against staff members and these are rigorously followed in order to ensure children's continuing safety and well-being. The daily attendance of children and practitioners is now clearly recorded and is monitored by the deputy manager, further promoting children's safety. Thorough risk assessments ensure that hazards are minimised or removed. This means that children play safely and enjoy their time at the nursery. The nursery has made considerable progress since their last inspection. The manager and deputy manager have worked in partnership with all practitioners and have sought advice from other professionals. They have addressed all actions and have carried out a comprehensive evaluation of the nursery, which is now actively used as a working document and informs the setting of clear targets for improvements. The manager's ability to efficiently prioritise actions has enabled practitioners to focus on the most significant areas and this has led to substantial improvements in the provision for children. For example, the assessment and planning processes have been completely reviewed and simplified. These now successfully identify children's individual learning needs and support practitioners in planning effective play opportunities to meet these.

The manager sets high standards for the nursery. She has developed good procedures to ensure that practitioners are well supported in their work. For example, all practitioners have regular supervision sessions and are supported in attending training and developing their professional practice. This has a positive impact on children. For example, as a result of specific training where senior practitioners demonstrated good practice, practitioners are now able to put their own knowledge into practice. This has improved their interactions with children so that they extend children's thinking and understanding as they play. All practitioners work well together to ensure that they are meeting the requirements of the Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage. For example, they use their regular team meetings and ongoing discussions with the manager to review their practice and check that they are consistently promoting children's health, welfare and development. The manager now has good monitoring procedures that enable her to identify any areas where groups or individual children require further support. She is, therefore, able to support practitioners in planning appropriately and ensuring that all children make good progress. For example, having noted that mathematics was a potentially weak area, the manager provided further resources and also supported practitioners in planning extended activities and play opportunities to promote this area.

The manager and practitioners are experienced and have a good understanding of the roles of other professionals. They can, therefore, seek further help for children and families when needed. There are good procedures for sharing information with other providers caring for the children. For example, practitioners contact other nurseries in

order to exchange assessment information, enabling all to take a consistent approach to promoting children's welfare and development. The setting's good partnerships with parents helps to ensure that they are kept well informed of their child's progress and activities. For example, they have frequent opportunities to meet with their child's key person and view their child's assessment records. Practitioners also use white boards outside each room to provide information about the daily planning. Overall, the positive attitude of the nursery manager and all practitioners is to be commended and has played a significant part in improving their practice and achieving a higher grade. As a result, children are now cared for in a well-organised environment and are offered a creative variety of activities and resources that stimulate and motivate them.

The Childcare Register

The requirements for the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are **Met**

The requirements for the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are **Met**

What inspection judgements mean

Registered early years provision

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	Outstanding provision is highly effective in meeting the needs of all children exceptionally well. This ensures that children are very well prepared for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 2	Good	Good provision is effective in delivering provision that meets the needs of all children well. This ensures children are ready for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	The provision is not giving children a good standard of early years education and/or there are minor breaches of the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be monitored and inspected within twelve months of the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	Provision that is inadequate requires significant improvement and/or enforcement action. The provision is failing to give children an acceptable standard of early years education and/or is not meeting the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be monitored and inspected again within six months of the date of this inspection.
Met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider continues to meet the requirements for registration.
Not met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider does not meet the requirements for registration.

Inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of provision that is registered on the Early Years Register. The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and care, known as the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY233564
Local authority	Luton
Inspection number	918535
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 17
Total number of places	50
Number of children on roll	60
Name of provider	Christiane Elisabeth Fisher
Date of previous inspection	11/04/2013
Telephone number	01582 574390

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Type of provision

For the purposes of this inspection the following definitions apply:

Full-time provision is that which operates for more than three hours. These are usually known as nurseries, nursery schools and pre-schools and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the higher fee for registration.

Sessional provision operates for more than two hours but does not exceed three hours in any one day. These are usually known as pre-schools, kindergartens or nursery schools

and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the lower fee for registration.

Childminders care for one or more children where individual children attend for a period of more than two hours in any one day. They operate from domestic premises, which are usually the childminder's own home. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Out of school provision may be sessional or full-time provision and is delivered before or after school and/or in the summer holidays. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. Where children receive their Early Years Foundation Stage in school these providers do not have to deliver the learning and development requirements in full but should complement the experiences children receive in school.

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