

Acorn at Cedars

Cedars County Combined School, Bury Street, Newport Pagnell, Buckinghamshire, MK16 0DT

Inspection date

26/11/2013

Previous inspection date

17/03/2009

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This inspection:

2

Previous inspection:

1

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

- The educational programmes are stimulating and support children to make good progress in their learning in preparation for school.
- Children with special educational needs and /or disabilities are well cared for as staff are skilled in providing the care required for each child's specific needs.
- Effective self-evaluation means that the staff continually extend the good service for children and their families.
- The staff place a strong emphasis on establishing effective partnerships with parents and others in order to successfully meet the children's individual needs.

It is not yet outstanding because

- Although children make good progress in their communication and language, not all staff consistently use effective questioning to further children's speaking and listening skills.
- Although children enjoy playing outdoors, they do not have access to a wide range of materials and resources to further ignite their ideas and play experiences. Babies do not have access to sturdy push along toys to further support their walking skills.

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 the play areas, sensory room and garden.
- The inspector had discussions with children, parents and staff.
- The inspector undertook a joint observation with the manager in the sensory room.
- The inspector sampled a range of documentation including children's records, safeguarding procedures, the setting self-evaluation.

Inspector

Kim Mundy

Full report

Information about the setting

Acorn at Cedars registered in 2005. Acorn at Cedars is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare register. It is run by Acorn Childcare Limited and operates from a building within the grounds of Cedars Primary School in Newport Pagnell, Buckinghamshire. There is access to the outdoor play area.

The nursery is open each weekday from 7.30am to 6pm for 51 weeks of the year. It also offers wrap around care for children who attend the Cedars Primary school nursery class. The breakfast and after school clubs offer a service for children aged four to eight and accepts children up to 11 years. The breakfast club operates from 8am to 8.50am and the after school club from 3.10pm to 6pm.

The nursery is in receipt of funding for the provision of free early education for children aged two-, three- and four years. Children attend for a variety of sessions. Systems are in place to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and children who are learning to speak English as an additional language. The setting employs 11 staff including the manager and deputy manager. Of these, 10 staff hold appropriate early years qualifications.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- continue to develop the consistency of teaching to further support children's good speaking and listening skills
- extend the range of outdoor materials and resources so children can further explore and develop their ideas, and provide push along toys to support babies when learning to walk.

Inspection judgements

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

Children make good progress in their learning and development because the systems for planning and assessment are effective in practice. Staff observe the children's progress and record this in their learning journals, which clearly show how the children's skills are emerging and identifies their next steps. Information is provided for parents about the educational programmes. Some staff use effective teaching techniques such as open questioning, commentating and demonstrating tasks. However, other staff do not use

these consistently to fully support children's communication and language development. Parents have good opportunities to be involved in their children's learning, for example, they are welcome to come in to the nursery to read stories. The children enjoy taking 'Browsey Bear' home and on outings with them to the park, for example. Children share this experience with their parents, nursery staff and friends. The children draw pictures, take photos and write about the activities they do with 'Browsey Bear'.

All children enjoy rhythmical activities such as playing musical instruments and joining in songs and rhymes. More able children are encouraged to recall and talk about events in their lives at circle time. Staff are affectionate and provide support for babies and young children's emotional well-being, enabling them to move away and return for cuddles and reassurance. All children develop good independence skills, for example, as they learn to dress and undress and help themselves to toys and resources in the play rooms. Children make good progress in literacy. Younger children explore early writing as they make marks with their fingers in paint and use chunky crayons and chalks. More able children practise their early writing skills both indoors and outdoors and write for a variety of purposes. Children enjoy books and stories. Staff extend their interest through the good use of puppets and props. Babies interact warmly with the soft rabbit puppets as staff sing songs with them. Older children listen well to a story and respond enthusiastically as staff involve them successfully in counting. There are many activities to help children develop a good understanding of colour, number, shape and size. For example, in the baby room, babies post shapes, thread beads and stack bricks. Older children enjoy more challenging activities such as exploring floating and sinking objects in the water play.

Children develop good physical skills as they climb, balance and slide. However, they have fewer opportunities to select from a wide range of materials and resources to further promote their own ideas in the nursery garden. There is ample space to encourage babies to sit, walk, grasp, stretch, roll and reach for objects. However, they do not have access to sturdy push along toys to further support their walking skills. Staff plan a range of opportunities for children to develop a good awareness of the world in which they live. They learn to care for living things as they grow vegetables and observe, for example, newts in the pond. Children begin to learn about multicultural Britain as they celebrate festivals and as part of the curriculum, they enjoy learning Spanish. They use their imagination and develop their creativity as they join in art and craft activities, play musical instruments and dress up in the make-believe area. The children enjoy positive learning experiences to prepare them well for their future learning.

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

The open plan arrangements of this nursery help children to become very familiar with both play areas. The play areas are warm and inviting and entice children to explore. Each child has a key person who builds close emotional attachments from the outset of a child's placement. In the absence of a child's key person, there is a buddy system in place although; all staff know the children well. Staff are good role models and support children to behave well through consistent positive reinforcement. Children show a strong sense of belonging, receiving encouragement and praise from the staff throughout the day, which

effectively builds their self-esteem and confidence. Parents state that they value the staffs' support when individual behaviour issues arise. They discuss children's individual behaviour management in order to provide consistency between the nursery and children's home environment. The children respond well to praise and sticker rewards.

Children learn to lead healthy lifestyles. Staff follow routines to support children's good health. Babies sleep comfortably in individual cots and younger children have rest beds. Good nappy changing facilities are in place and in order to minimise cross infection, staff wear protective clothing and children have clean bed linen every day. Staff discuss and cater for children's individual dietary requirements. Nutritious main meals are prepared off-site by qualified cooks and are then delivered to the nursery. Good food hygiene procedures are followed and food temperatures are checked. At relaxing snack and meal times, children learn to pour their drinks and serve food from bowls on the table. This further supports their independence skills in preparation for moving on to school.

In order to support children's well-being, all accidents are fully recorded and shared with parents so that appropriate care is followed up after children leave the setting. The manager monitors the frequency and types of accidents as part of the nursery's risk assessment process. This enables staff to make any necessary changes within the nursery to maintain the children's safety. Several staff hold a first aid qualification in order to treat any accidents appropriately. Nursery staff administer prescribed medication with prior written consent from parents, which is recorded accurately.

Children enjoy taking part in outdoor physical activities with a visiting sports teacher. Staff help children to keep themselves safe, for example, they are taught how to handle equipment and resources safely and how to cross the road safely. Children participate in regular emergency evacuations, which helps them to learn what they should do in the event of an emergency. Overall, the nursery is well-resourced with good quality nursery furniture, toys and resources. Therefore, children's well-being is promoted successfully.

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

The enthusiastic management team has a good understanding of the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage. The inspection was brought forward following a notification from the provider to Ofsted about an incident when staff put a child at possible risk by allowing them to climb furniture. The provider reported the concerns very promptly and implemented the suitable nursery performance management procedures to ensure staff do not allow children to take inappropriate risks again. Staff do encourage children to take small risks in order to learn to keep themselves safe, but on this particular occasion a child was put at unnecessary risk because it was not adequately planned for. Good risk assessment procedures are in place to minimise possible hazards to children. During the inspection there no safety issues were observed. All staff complete child protection training and have a very good knowledge of the necessary procedures to follow, which means that children are protected. Robust recruitment procedures, including effective induction procedures for

staff, safeguard the children. All of the required documentation is accurately maintained.

Self-evaluation is effective and identifies the strengths and weaknesses of the nursery in order to set future goals and promote continuous development. Secure systems are in place for the ongoing support and development of staff, for example, one-to-one supervision, staff appraisals and meetings. In the event of staff underperforming, the manager describes suitable procedures to support staff to improve their practice. The management team work alongside staff and act as good role models.

The manager is very clear about her role and responsibility to meet the learning and development requirements. She oversees the planning and implementation of the well balanced educational programmes. Effective systems are in place for the progress check for two-year-old children, which helps to identify possible gaps in children's learning. This means that through early intervention, staff can plan any necessary support for children. The nursery promotes inclusive practice and welcomes children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and English as an additional language. Staff work with other professionals such as specialist teachers to effectively support the children in the nursery environment. When caring for children who are learning to speak English as an additional language, staff ask parents for 'key words' to use with their child in the nursery to help them feel secure. Staff encourage parents to bring in things from home such as familiar music. The nursery has established very good relationships with Cedars Primary school. Children benefit from using the school's facilities such as the sensory room and outdoor play areas. With parent consent, relevant information about the children is shared between the nursery and school. Consequently, the children become familiar with the school environment and the teachers, which helps to prepare them for moving on to school.

Partnerships with parents and carers are good. Parents' state they feel very welcome at this nursery. They receive lots of feedback about their child's nursery life through the communication books, newsletters, e-mails, open days, face-to-face contact, informative learning journal and stay and play sessions. During the inspection, all parents speak highly of the nursery and they report that their children settle quickly and are extremely happy. The small and friendly nursery provides a welcoming and stimulating environment in which the children clearly have fun as they learn through play.

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	EY290049
Local authority	Milton Keynes
Inspection number	942269
Type of provision	Full-time provision
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 8
Total number of places	52
Number of children on roll	70
Name of provider	Acorn Childcare Ltd
Date of previous inspection	17/03/2009
Telephone number	01908 616139

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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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