

Acre Wood Nursery School

197-199 Woodside Road, AMERSHAM, Buckinghamshire, HP6 6NU

Inspection date

04/11/2013

Previous inspection date

15/04/2013

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This inspection:

4

Previous inspection:

2

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend	4
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The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision is inadequate

- There is a disconnection between the systems for planning, assessing and monitoring the educational programmes and children's learning and developmental experiences in the nursery. As result, the programmes of education are shallow; they do not have the required depth to support children to make good or better progress in learning and development.
- Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is inconsistent and poor; as a result, some children are overly compliant and others display unruly behaviour. These extremes in the learning environment hinder children from making good or better progress from their starting points.
- Staff deployment is not always effective to meet the needs of all the children. As a result, there are times when children are bored and not engaged in purposeful activities.
- Risk assessments are ineffective to safeguard children; omissions in safety practices present some risks to children.

It has the following strengths

- Staff plan well to meet the needs of children under two; they engage warmly in play with these children. This warm and personal attention promotes babies' personal social and emotional development and builds their confidence in the adults who care for them.

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.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed children's activities in all areas of the nursery, including outdoors.
- The inspector tracked children in the nursery and looked at assessment records and activity plans.
- The inspector reviewed qualification, recruitment and suitability information with the manager.
- The inspector carried out joint observations with the manager.
- The inspector reviewed documentation and discussed self-evaluation with the manager.

Inspector

Cordalee Harrison

Full report

Information about the setting

Acre Wood Nursery School registered in 2012 and is run by a private provider. The nursery operates from a large detached house in Amersham in Buckinghamshire and is one of three provisions owned by the provider. Children use seven activity rooms, a sleep area and a secure outdoor play area. The nursery provides a service for the local community and it is open each weekday from 7.30am to 7pm all year round, except during Christmas and bank holidays. The nursery is in receipt of funding for the provision of free early education to children aged three and four years. The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register. There are currently 121 children on roll in the early years age group and they attend for a variety of sessions. The nursery supports children who are learning to speak English as an additional language. The nursery employs 18 staff. Of these, two are qualified to level 6; nine hold appropriate qualifications at level 3 and three at level 2; the remaining four are unqualified but are working towards a level 3 qualification.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

To meet the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage the provider must:

- ensure staff supervision provides effective support, coaching and training for each practitioner to improve the consistency and quality of teaching and to help them ignite children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and build on their capacity to learn
- ensure risk assessments identify aspects of the provision and practice that need to be evaluated on a regular basis and how these risks are will be removed or minimised, with particular regard to the windows and blind cords on the first floor of the premises
- ensure that staff have appropriate qualifications, training, skills and knowledge and a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities, with particular regard to managing children's behaviour
- ensure that staffing arrangements meet the needs of all children, by making sure that they give their time and attention to engage purposefully with the children
- ensure that observations are used effectively to plan learning experiences for each child to help them make good progress
- improve the educational programme for personal, social and emotional development by managing behaviour consistently, and helping children to understand that some behaviour is unacceptable
- improve the educational programme for communication and language by providing more opportunities for younger children to develop their speaking and listening skills and encouraging older children to listen attentively in a range of situations, giving their attention to what others say, responding appropriately and following instructions
- improve systems for planning, assessing, monitoring and tracking, as well as the educational programmes, to ensure staff consistently deliver the best possible outcomes for children across all areas
- improve the self-evaluation process to ensure it continually evaluates all aspects of the settings' performance to consistently identify strengths and areas for development.

Inspection judgements

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

Overall, planning for learning and development across the nursery is very shallow and inconsistent. In addition to this, monitoring for the educational programme is inadequate. As a result, most of children's learning experiences are uninteresting and provide the majority of children with little or no challenge. Some activities are not well suited to the children, because learning outcomes are not clearly identified. For example, a third of the children who participate in a large group activity supervised by three staff are not purposefully engaged in learning. Staff do not realise that the activity is not beneficial to the majority of the children; they do not realise that most of the children are bored and disengaged. Staff miss opportunities to speak with children and develop their communication and language in meaningful ways. For example, recorded nursery rhymes and songs play continuously for long periods in an area of the nursery. As a result, children who are developing their communication skills find it hard to speak and make their voices heard.

There is detachment between activity plans and children's learning experiences. Therefore, while activities broadly introduce children to the areas of learning and are generally in keeping with their stage of development, the quality of teaching is mostly poor. Systems for planning, observing, assessing and tracking children are ineffective overall. This is particularly evident for the children in the pre-school and in two to three years rooms. Here staff do not make good enough use of information from observations to tailor individual children's learning to support them to make good or better progress in all areas of learning. For example, some of the younger children show a lack of confidence to speak, as the learning environment makes it difficult for them to speak and listen. Some of the older children show confidence to speak; however, they do not show the same progress in the listening element of communication and language.

Children do not always respond positively to staff's guidance. At times, this leads to chaotic situations in the pre-school areas of the nursery because of children's unruly behaviour. This means that some children are not making sufficient progress in the area of learning for personal social and emotional development. Additionally, it disrupts the learning of others and prevents them from properly experiencing all of the activities that are available. Learning environments where children are not able to concentrate and consolidate their learning reduces their individual achievements. Key persons in the pre-school and two to three year rooms have identified gaps in specific areas of learning, such as personal social and emotional development, and communication and language for some children. However, the plans to progress these aspects of children's learning are sketchy and not communicated well to other members of the team. Staff do not take a joined-up approach or use consistent good quality teaching to close these gaps in a timely way. Consequently, for some children there is little movement from their starting points. Staff do not use the systems for monitoring and tracking children well to make sure that every child has the solid foundation that they require to build their future learning. This means that some children are disadvantaged.

All groups of children play freely outdoors each day and use of the area provides opportunities for them to use some large equipment. These activities go some way to ensuring that children get physical exercise. For example, children climb, ride bikes and use balls as they play outdoors. However, there is limited planning for the use of this area, which means that staff do not make the best use of these resources to engage children in learning across all areas. As a result, there are limited opportunities for children who learn best outside to develop their individual learning styles. Although there is limited focused planning for mathematics, children experience this area of learning as they use resources, such as construction sets, sand and water. Additionally, there are a few numbers displayed in the pre-school room. Children express their creativity as they paint and draw, and use writing implements. In all areas, staff provide children with a range of messy activities. They explore different textures as they play with shredded paper and learn about shapes as they mould and cut the dough. Throughout the nursery, books are in easy reach for children. Baby room staff support children to explore books; they use the bright pictures to engage with children and to give children one to one attention. The well laid out environment encourages these children to increase their mobility as they explore to make interactive toys work. They test the safe resources, and enjoy the sensory experiences. For example, babies are mesmerised as they spin the reflective toy and the bells jingle; they repeat the experience many times.

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

Although the staff take some positive steps to promote children's well-being, they do not always handle children's personal care in the most gentle manner. This means children's well-being is not assured at all times. Every child is allocated a key person and this helps children to adjust to the nursery's routines at the start and when they there transitions between groups. Additionally, it provides a direct person for parents to speak to about their children. Staff in the baby rooms make effective use of information about children's starting points. They plan well for the individual child and prepare the learning environment to ensure that their learning experiences are stimulating and inviting. Staff join the babies in play. Their warm and personal attention promotes babies' personal social and emotional development and builds their confidence in the adults who care for them. Staff in other areas of the nursery do not give the same level of consideration to how the children will spend their time. Although staff ratios are met, staff do not realise the importance of treating each child as an individual. In addition, the deployment of staff in the areas where older children are based is ineffective as staff do not meet children's individual needs well. For example, children are unhappy and upset, because they want to continue playing outside. Staff acknowledge the reason for the children's unhappiness, but are inflexible to change the routine to suit the child. The nappy changing routine is protracted, and has little bearing on the children's needs. For example, staff withdraw children from activities with no regard to the children's engagement. As a result, children become complaint and show little emotion. This poor use of staff's time leaves fewer staff to engage children purposeful in activities. As a result, most of the children are bored during the hour long period while nappy changing is taking place.

Staff do not discriminate against children or their families. For example, staff are aware of

children's home language and they use some appropriate methods to help them to learn to speak English. However, poor provision for children learning and development and inconsistency in meeting children's individual needs does not promote equality well. Children are not learning to do their best and this does not equip them well now, or for the future. Staff's management of behaviour is not good enough to help children to learn to behave well and to consider others. Staff are aware of the behaviour policy and they give examples of suitable methods for managing behaviour. However, in some areas of the nursery there is a disconnection between their knowledge and practice. For example, when pre-school aged children are noisy, staff use shouting as a means of getting their attention. This does not model acceptable behaviour for children. At times, the pre-school area is a noisy and chaotic environment, where children demonstrate poor behaviour and show little regard for each other.

Staff take appropriate care of children's health and personal needs and some practices in the nursery help children to promote some aspects of healthy lifestyles. For example, food is nutritiously balanced and varied and all groups of children spend time outdoors each day. However, not all practices to promote healthy lifestyles are well considered; for example, a large group of children all wash hands in the same bowl of water at lunchtime. Practice such as this does not help children to properly understand the reasons for washing hands before handling food. The nursery environment is secure and some practices help to raise children's awareness of some aspects of personal safety; for example, stairgates are in appropriate places, and children practise the evacuation of the premises and take some risks as they play outdoors. Staff do not always intervene in a timely manner to help children learn about safety in ways that are meaningful to them. For example, when children play with the skipping ropes in ways other than for their purpose, staff do not extend the activity to help children to achieve their outcome safely. Overall, procedures to assess risks in the nursery are inadequate to safeguard children. There are some elements of practice that have not been properly considered. For example, the mechanism to restrict the opening of a window on the first floor is not in place and the danger that the window blind cord presents are overlooked. These safety omissions present a risk to children.

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

Ofsted brought this inspection forward following a notification from the setting of concerns pertaining to safeguarding practices in the nursery. The inspection found that the leadership and management team adhered strictly to the nursery policies and procedures for dealing with child protection matters. The leadership and management team manages some aspects of safeguarding appropriately. For example, staff have secure understanding of child protection matters. They are familiar with the child protection policy and they are clear about what to do if concerns arise about children's well-being. The recruitment procedure is sound all staff who work with children are vetted through the Disclosure and Barring Services procedures. Staff in the nursery manage some documentation that is required appropriately and this goes some way to safeguard children. For example, attendance records are in place for staff, children and visitors. However, the nursery does

not make effective use of risk assessment to identify and address risk all potential risks to children. As a result, some practices in the nursery do not identify and minimise all risks to children's safety.

The leadership and management team do not meet all of the safeguarding and welfare requirements. Additionally, the team makes inadequate arrangements for children's learning and development. The quality of teaching and learning, behaviour management, and the systems to monitor children's learning and the educational programme are not good enough. Consequently, children make inadequate progress in learning and development and this does not promote their readiness for school.

Parents state that they are happy with the care and service that the nursery provides. They state that the gradual settling in of children helps children to settle well. This is because it provides opportunities for them to share useful information about their children's routines. They value the written and verbal information that staff share with them daily, and welcomes the opportunities that the nursery provides for them to review their children's achievements records.

The leadership team is clear about the requirement to carry out the assessment for children at age two years and some staff have had the experience of completing these records.

This inspection shows that the nursery's performance has dipped since the last inspection. Even so, the provider shows some capacity for improvements. For example, there is engagement with the local authority early years professionals and they have identified some areas for improvement, such as to develop the use of the outside play area for the benefit of all of the children. Additionally, they have identified some strategies to improve the transitional arrangements as children move between areas of the nursery.

There is a clear induction procedure for new staff and staff returning to work after absences. They complete or refresh their knowledge of safeguarding, food and hygiene, and fire safety. All of these staff members are shown how to complete childcare procedures, such as changing nappies and the related recording. There are procedures for regular monthly reviews during staff probationary periods. Additionally, there are systems in place for team and room meetings and annual staff supervisions. The leadership and management team provides some opportunities for staffs' ongoing training. For example, all staff have recently attended behaviour management and safeguarding training. There are systems for monitoring essential qualifications, such as first aid, and this ensures there are always sufficient qualified first aiders available for the benefit of the children. However, although the required policies and procedures are in place to support the running of the nursery, the management team does not do all that is necessary to implement these successfully. As a result, practice in the nursery overall is not good enough to continuously drive improvement for the benefit of the children.

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	EY444351
Local authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	938804
Type of provision	Full-time provision
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 8
Total number of places	61
Number of children on roll	121
Name of provider	Acre Wood Nursery School Limited
Date of previous inspection	15/04/2013
Telephone number	01494729007

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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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