

# Acorn at Cedars

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

<b>Inspection date</b>	04/02/2014
Previous inspection date	26/11/2013

<b>The quality and standards of the early years provision</b>	<b>This inspection:</b>	3
	Previous inspection:	2
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		3
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		3
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		3

## The quality and standards of the early years provision

### This provision requires improvement

- The nursery is very welcoming to both parents and children. It successfully supports parents and children to adapt to the difference between home and nursery.
- There is a good awareness by staff about how to keep children safe and they help children to be aware of their own safety while they play.
- Educational programmes for physical development are managed well; children spend lots of time being physically active both inside and outside. They are learning independent hygiene routines and find out about healthy eating.

### It is not yet good because

- Educational programmes for literacy are not consistently provided to support the learning needs of older children and to help them build skills for school.
- The monitoring of practice is not sufficiently rigorous in order to identify weaknesses in staff's knowledge and understanding of the curriculum to ensure educational programmes are delivered regardless of circumstances.
- Planning is not consistently used to meet children's learning needs. As a result, staff miss out on opportunities to extend children's learning.
- Staff are not sufficiently rigorous in collecting information from parents about children's starting points to support their own initial assessments.

## 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 undertaken by the children and staff.
- The inspector discussed practice with staff and managers.  
The inspector sampled documents in relation to children's learning and development, and those relating to staff training, support and skills, safeguarding, safe recruitment and complaints.
- The inspector took account of parents' views through discussion and evaluation of parent questionnaires.
- The inspector took account of the nurseries self-evaluation.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation with the manager.

## Inspector

Carolyn Hasler

## Full report

### Information about the setting

Acorn at Cedars registered in 2005 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 an 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 accept 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 nine staff, including the manager and deputy manager who hold Early Years Professional Status. A further six staff also hold appropriate early years qualifications.

### What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- monitor relief staff's knowledge and understanding of the curriculum so that in the absence of key staff they are able to deliver good quality learning experiences
- improve planning in order to consistently plan educational programmes related to children's learning needs

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

- develop further engagements with parents by collecting information from them about what children can already do to assist in developing initial assessments of their progress.

## Inspection judgements

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

Staff ensure children feel confident and self-assured. They encourage children to initiate play and follow their own interests. Staff support children's games and, in some instances, they use these opportunities to encourage learning. In the younger age groups staff

introduce new language, naming objects and using counting as they encourage play. These children are exposed to sensory play and encouraged to build confidence in movement and balance. Planned external activities, such as zumba, are much enjoyed by older children. They engage in physical movement to music which energises them. Staff read stories to children and engage them in conversations about their play. In general, children are meeting expected levels of development within the prime areas for their age. However, educational programmes to support literacy skills for older children are not offered consistently. Daily activities, such as self-registration or opportunities to practise letters and sounds, are sometimes forgotten. On days where key staff are absent the nursery relies on additional staff from sister nurseries. Planning is not consistently rigorous and therefore does not support these staff who are less familiar with the children. As a result, it does not fully meet children's learning needs. At these times staff prioritise children's care and welfare. Therefore the nursery is unable to provide consistent teaching skills regardless of circumstances and for some children this impacts on their learning.

The nursery is friendly and welcoming to parents. Staff collect initial information from parents about children to support their welfare and care. However, they are less successful in collecting information about children's development. This means that their initial assessments are not fully effective because they do not take account of parents' understanding of their children. Overall, there are effective systems in place to observe and assess children. Between two and three years a summary of children's development is shared with parents. Staff are more effective in encouraging parents ongoing contribution to children's development. They are encouraged to share their observations of children's learning from home. Staff help parents understand the importance of talking to children throughout the day and enjoying books together.

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

The key person system works generally well. Key people take on the role of main carer and a buddy key person ensures consistency. This helps children form a secure bond with a special person or persons. The staff work closely with parents to help children adapt to the difference between home care and nursery life. Suitable settling-in procedures ensure children have time to make the adjustments and are comfortable. Babies enjoy close physical contact with their key persons who cuddle them close during bottle feeding times or when they show signs of tiredness or anxiety. These early secure relationships enable children to show affection and kindness towards others as they grow up. Toddlers shake rattles for babies and touch them gently. They play side by side but there are some instances when they copy each other's behaviours and giggle together. The staff talk to children respectfully and manage their behaviour appropriately. They show them by example how to behave and conform to the simple boundaries. They encourage good behaviour through positive acknowledgements and they remind children how to play safely. As children develop confidence they gain skills in building friendships. They learn all about other communities and people. The group cares for a diverse range of children and staff actively encourage children to accept each other's differences. Overall, the environment provides a range of resources to help children explore and feel confident about themselves and others.

The staff show a secure understanding of safeguarding procedures, including whistle blowing. They are vigilant to risks, share their concerns and report hazards appropriately. This helps to ensure that children have a safe space to play in. Staff promote children's independence relatively well. Children gain skills in learning to dress and undress themselves. They successfully manage personal hygiene tasks relative to their age and ability and are supported where appropriate. Children learn all about healthy eating. Meals are nutritious and children are encouraged at an early age to feed themselves. They have a growing patch in the garden helping them understand where their food comes from.

The environment is adequately resourced. The baby room is organised with low-level storage so that babies can reach toys. There are lots of 'walker' toys to encourage young children to pull themselves up and walk around. There are also many sensory resources to allow them to explore with their fingers and hands. There are labels on storage units to help older children find what they want and some posters displayed on the walls. Children spend great chunks of their day initiating games in outside spaces. Overall, most children are ready emotionally to move between the nursery rooms. The nursery offers wrap around care which complements school hours. This arrangement helps children gradually adjust to change and prepares them for more formal learning.

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

The leadership and management team ensures ratios are met. However, it is less rigorous in having an effective contingency plan in place to ensure teaching and learning is effective when key staff are absent. Overall, systems to track and monitor children's development are effective. However, planning is not fully effective and this has an impact on relief staff's ability to deliver the educational programmes.

The company has a human resource department which manages the suitability checks of staff. This promotes safe recruitment and maintains suitability. Permanent staff are regularly supervised and new staff are mentored. Regular monitoring of staff informs appraisals. There is a range of other opportunities to discuss practice and develop skills such as team or planning meetings. Current plans include developing staff practice and skills towards behaviour management. Further training is available through the company and the development team. However, systems to monitor the performance of relief staff when key permanent staff are off sick are not effective. Weak planning means that these staff are not aware of the nursery's curriculum and are therefore not able to fully meet children's learning needs. The leadership and management team works in conjunction with safeguarding agencies and keeps Ofsted informed appropriately when incidents occur.

Overall, the nursery values parent's views and they contribute towards development plans. The nursery works with the local authority on quality assurance and responds promptly to recommendations. Staff are reflective of their service and act upon improvement plans, such as successfully developing outside spaces. There are plans to introduce e-journals. The intention is to improve the quality of information collected on development and to

share this between the nursery and home. Staff are keen for parents to feel valued as co-educators. The nursery works closely with the combined school on the same grounds. It shares care of a number of children during the day, including before and after school. The close relationship between these provisions helps the effective sharing of information in order to support children's safety, welfare and learning needs. Overall, the leadership and management team understands the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and most of the time they meet these appropriately.

### **The Childcare Register**

The requirements for the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are	<b>Met</b>
The requirements for the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are	<b>Met</b>

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	EY290049
<b>Local authority</b>	Milton Keynes
<b>Inspection number</b>	953064
<b>Type of provision</b>	Full-time provision
<b>Registration category</b>	Childcare - Non-Domestic
<b>Age range of children</b>	0 - 8
<b>Total number of places</b>	28
<b>Number of children on roll</b>	42
<b>Name of provider</b>	Acorn Childcare Ltd
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	26/11/2013
<b>Telephone number</b>	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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