

Acorn Day Nursery

Burton Park, Polwell Lane, Burton Latimer, Kettering, NN15 5PS

Inspection date

18/03/2014

Previous inspection date

10/01/2012

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This inspection:

2

Previous inspection:

3

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 is good because the staff team have a strong understanding of how to plan activities that take account of individual children's interests and learning styles. They use information gathered from their observations and from home in order to support children to achieve well given their unique starting points and capabilities.
- The management team are supported by the company to monitor their practice and to address issues that arise. The manager and deputies work closely with the staff team, carry out regular evaluations and reflect on all aspects of their work with the children.
- The very strong partnerships with parents, based on effective communication and sharing of information on a daily basis, result in children receiving a consistent approach to their care and learning.
- Children are safe because the staff team keep their knowledge up to date through training and discussions in team meetings about safeguarding, and there are thorough risk assessments of the nursery premises.

It is not yet outstanding because

- The opportunities for children to learn about the risks involved in their play have not been fully maximised.
- Pre-school children's opportunities to access labels and visual displays in the variety of languages spoken in the nursery are not fully optimised.

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 the playrooms and in the nursery garden.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation with the manager.
- The inspector held meetings with the manager of the provision, the company's childcare and early years managers and three members of staff.
- The inspector spoke with the children at times throughout the inspection.
- The inspector looked at children's assessment records and the planning documentation.
- The inspector checked evidence of the suitability and qualifications of practitioners working with the children, and took account of the provider's self-evaluation form.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents and carers who were spoken to on the day of inspection.

Inspector

Melanie Eastwell

Full report

Information about the setting

Acorn Day Nursery was registered in 2006 on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. It is one of 12 provisions run by Acorn Childcare Ltd and operates from purpose-built premises at Burton Park in Burton Latimer, Northamptonshire. The nursery is managed by Acorn Childcare Ltd and serves the local area. There are two enclosed areas available for outdoor play.

The nursery employs 13 members of childcare staff. Of these, 12 hold appropriate early years qualifications at levels 3, 4 and 5, including one with Early Years Professional Status. The nursery opens Monday to Friday for 51 weeks of the year. Sessions are from 7.30am until 6.15pm. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 99 children on roll who are in the early years age group. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-olds. It supports children who speak English as an additional language and children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- extend the already good opportunities for children to learn about their personal safety and the potential risks in their play, for example, by involving them further in the risk assessments for the outdoor and superhero and fantasy activities
- expand on the already strong inclusive practice, particularly in relation to pre-school children who speak English as an additional language, for example, by increasing the labels and visual displays that show the variety of languages they speak at home.

Inspection judgements

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

Children attending this nursery are confident to choose from the very good range of well-planned activities and resources that cover the seven areas of learning. The staff team are knowledgeable and mostly very experienced, and they demonstrate a good understanding of how to teach the children in their care. For example, an activity in the garden when children turn over logs to look for bugs and worms. The children show wonder and exclamation about the woodlice they find. The member of staff teaches them about the features of their body, such as their 'wiggly' legs, and the children recall when they found woodlice at home. Later when they find some worms, the member of staff comments on the difference in size and about how they move. The children use language including 'big'

and 'small'. This shared interest means that children are supported to learn about the natural world and their awareness of size. Young toddlers have a good variety of opportunities to explore a range of textures. For example, they thoroughly enjoy taking part in a water activity. The staff suggest that they add some colour to the water, and the children show interest as the colouring mixes with the water. Later they squeal and giggle with delight when the staff encourage them to swirl the water round and it splashes them. These children also enjoy exploring the paint. The staff allow them to be creative and make their own pictures using the brushes or their hands. Children are learning to be confident to try these experiences because the staff provide very positive interactions with them, which results in increasing their confidence.

The children are well prepared for their move on to school when the time comes. Throughout their time in the nursery, the children's independence skills are promoted through a wide variety of experiences. For example, older children find their names when they arrive and all children have their own peg with a picture and their name displayed. The children in all age groups are able to serve their own food at mealtimes and they are able to choose freely from the resources and activities. The staff ably promote children's personal, social and emotional development. They encourage them to share and to work together through ongoing narratives and discussions during their activities, always giving an explanation. Children have access to books at all times and they choose them freely. The staff are willing to read to them and the children then enthusiastically re-tell the familiar story, mimicking the emphasis in the member of staff's voice. The staff use opportunities that arise during children's play to include numbers and counting. For example, they count when they are outside playing in the mud kitchen and when laying out the cutlery for lunchtime. Therefore, children's awareness of literacy and numeracy is well supported. The nursery has developed very positive partnership working with parents, who are encouraged to be fully involved in their child's learning from the outset. The child's key person and the nursery manager offer all new children and their parents a home visit. The nursery have found that this contributes significantly to the quality of the information they get from parents about their child's learning at home. This information, as well as the initial observations made when they start attending the nursery, contributes to the identification of the children's starting points.

Parents are encouraged to use the 'interactive home learning boards' that are in each of the nursery rooms. These have ideas for activities they can do with their children at home to support their continued learning. Parents are fully involved in identifying their child's next steps in learning. This is because they attend parents' evenings and receive daily written and verbal feedback from the staff about their child's routines and activities. They are encouraged to complete observations at home, which are used in their child's observation file. The staff make effective use of observation and planning to clearly demonstrate the progress each child is making in their learning. The planning is flexible and evaluated each day so that any changes can be incorporated for the next day the children attend. The required progress check at age two has been established well into the nursery's observation and assessment procedures. Children who speak English as an additional language have their needs well met. The staff value their home language and celebrate their developing bilingual skills through discussions and some displays showing the flags of their home country. During home visits the children receive a talking book that contains recordings to help them prepare for starting nursery. However, there is scope to

extend the pre-school children's awareness of the variety of languages spoken in the nursery. Children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported. The nursery works closely with their parents and with any other agencies who are involved with them to ensure that any specific adaptations can be made to the planning, premises or equipment. These children have Individual Educational Programmes in place that take account of their unique needs, and these are regularly reviewed. This means that the children receive a consistent approach and that their needs continue to be met.

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

The children attending this nursery clearly demonstrate that they feel safe and have a sense of belonging. For example, babies and young toddlers settle readily to sleep and wake happily, and older toddlers approach the staff for reassurance and know that they can help themselves to resources from the low-level shelves and units. The pre-school children enjoy helping their younger friends in their activities and are eager and enthusiastic to get involved with all the activities available and to initiate conversations with the staff. The home visits that are offered contribute to children having a sense of well-being. This is because they can see familiar faces when they first come to the nursery to visit. During this visit the key person provides a photograph book showing images of the nursery and a toy that they bring with them when they start attending. This attention to detail in children's preparation for nursery is significant. The settling-in for each child is managed individually with their parents. Children are thoroughly prepared before they move between the rooms within the nursery. For example, steps are taken to have discussions with their parents, and the child's independence in their current room is further encouraged. For example, when children move from the baby room into the toddler room, they begin to sit on a different chair during lunchtime and are provided with a knife and fork rather than a spoon, and they have a cup without a lid. They are taken for visits to the new room by their key person, who has a handover meeting with the new key person. The children are able to spend time with their siblings as they wish during the day and children can see each other over the low fence between the two outside play areas. The toddlers and the pre-school children are encouraged to move freely between both rooms for the majority of the day, and this significantly prepares them for when they move on.

The children know all the staff well and they respond to their cheery greetings as they move between the rooms and when they play outside. Children are building close relationships with the staff because they spend lots of time with them, talking to them about what they are doing and consulting with them about the direction they want their activities to go. The staff caring for babies work very closely with their parents on an ongoing basis through written feedback and daily discussions about their care routines and weaning as necessary. Children throughout the nursery are able to form bonds with the staff because they work long days, which means the same person speaks to their parents when they arrive as when they leave, and this ensures a consistent approach. The staff have a buddy system to ensure that there is always someone present who knows the children well to provide feedback for their parents. Children behave very well because they are well supervised during their play. They are provided with an exciting range of activities

that are carefully planned by the staff and that follow their interests. The staff use appropriate strategies, such as distraction and explanation, that are suitable for the children's age and capabilities to gently manage any behaviour issues that arise. Children are learning about how to manage their own safety. For example, the staff talk to them about risks during their activities, such as being careful when they use the climbing equipment and when riding bikes down the slope. However, there is scope to further extend children's involvement in their own risk assessments, particularly in relation to outside activities and superhero or fantasy play.

This nursery places a strong emphasis on outdoor activities for the children. The exceptionally well-appointed garden is equipped to provide children with activities to promote their physical skills. For example, they can use the bikes and ride-on toys and demonstrate how fast they go when they use the pedals, they can dig and make mixtures using spoons, water and jugs in the mud kitchen area, and the garden has a range of different textures, such as grass, a safety surface and paths going up and down slopes. This well-used garden contributes to children's learning and enjoyment of being outside in the fresh air. They are able to move freely between the inside and outside play areas. Children are provided with a good range of healthy meals and snacks that are freshly prepared by the chef. Mealtimes are social occasions where they sit in small groups, supervised by the staff. Children choose when they have their snacks in the morning and afternoon and they have access to drinking water as they wish. Each child's dietary needs in relation to weaning and allergies are well managed by the staff. They ensure they seek detailed information from parents and share this with the chef. Children are protected from the risk of cross-infection because the staff follow effective procedures during nappy changes, including wearing gloves and aprons. Children are learning about managing their own personal hygiene because the staff talk to them about the importance of washing their hands before meals and after exploring in the garden.

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

The management team in the nursery have a good understanding of the requirements to safeguard children. The management team have reviewed all the associated policies and procedures and taken appropriate action to ensure that all staff are fully aware of their obligation in relation to whistleblowing. Safeguarding meets requirements and causes no concern. Appropriate checks on the adults working with the children are carried out to safeguard children, and the welfare of the children is monitored closely. The designated lead for safeguarding has a clear understanding of the role, and all staff are well versed in what to do should they have concerns about a child. Thorough risk assessments, which are monitored by the lead person for health and safety and by the company's head office, cover all aspects of the premises, the garden and the outings the children are involved in.

The company has supported the manager to recruit and retain a staff team who are experienced and well qualified and, as a result, the quality of the learning environment and the planned activities are well matched to each child's age and stage of development. This commitment to their staff has a positive impact on the teaching of the children. The staff understand how to facilitate children's learning and they are willing to get fully

involved in the children's activities, allowing them to lead what is going on. This means that children are supported effectively to make good progress in their learning and development. The manager organises the staffing to ensure that the required ratios are maintained at all times and that staff are effectively deployed to ensure children are safe and well supervised. For example, the senior room leaders monitor how many children are using the inside and outside play areas at any given time to ensure the staff are where they need to be. The management and staff team work well together and the staff are supported through effective and regular supervision and appraisals.

The nursery has developed strong partnership with the children's parents and they report highly complementary comments about their children receiving good quality care and how the staff promote their learning and well-being. The consistency for parents, relating to them being able to speak to the same person when they drop off their child in the morning and when they collect them at the end of the day, ensures the children receive a consistent approach and a smooth transition between home and nursery. The nursery welcomes the input from other agencies and professionals who are involved with the children. The nursery has developed a culture of reflecting on its practice. For example, the children's activities are evaluated throughout every day and the findings are used to inform the ongoing planning. The whole staff team are involved in this self-evaluation, making significant changes to improve the issues raised at the last inspection.

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	EY340856
Local authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	954347
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 17
Total number of places	65
Number of children on roll	99
Name of provider	Acorn Childcare Ltd
Date of previous inspection	10/01/2012
Telephone number	01536 726700

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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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