Acre Wood Day Nursery
394-396 Clay Lane, Birmingham, West Midlands, B26 1EU

**Inspection date** 22/05/2014
**Previous inspection date** 04/12/2013

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**The quality and standards of the early years provision**

**This provision requires improvement**

- Children enjoy the wide range of activities offered to them, particularly in the impressive outdoor areas.
- Staff respond appropriately to children’s needs, and positive interaction helps them to build relationships and feel secure.
- Children’s independence is promoted well. This helps them to become competent at tasks, such as serving their food and pouring their drinks.
- Children are effectively safeguarded by staff who have a clear understanding of policies and procedures, and a secure knowledge of how to protect children.

**It is not yet good because**

- Teaching is not sufficiently monitored to ensure consistency in the use of staff and parent observations, to help assess and plan for individual children's good progress.
- The monitoring of staff performance through robust and high-quality supervisions and appraisals is not yet fully realised.
- There are too few displays of children's artwork to help them and their parents reflect on their successes and to further support their confidence and self-awareness.
- Successful partnerships with children’s future providers are not fully established as a means to preparing them for the move to school.
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 compulsory part of the Childcare Register. This report includes a judgment about compliance with the requirements of that register.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed activities both indoors and outside.
- The inspector held meetings with the owner and manager and spoke with staff at appropriate times throughout the inspection.
- The inspector sampled children's records, learning and planning documentation and a selection of policies and procedures.
- The inspector checked evidence of suitability and qualifications of staff working with children, as well as the provider’s self-evaluation and improvement plan.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents.

Inspector

Lucy Showell
Full report

Information about the setting

Acre Wood Day Nursery was registered in 1999 and is on the Early Years Register and the compulsory part of the Childcare Register. It is situated in converted premises in the Yardley area of Birmingham and is privately owned. The nursery serves the local area and is accessible to all children. It operates from four rooms and there is an enclosed area available for outside play. The nursery opens Monday to Friday all the year round, from 7.30am to 6pm, with the exception of Bank Holidays and one week at Christmas. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 37 children on roll who are in the early years age group. The nursery provides funded early education for three- and four-year-olds. It employs 10 members of staff who work directly with the children. Of these, seven hold early years qualifications at level 3 and two hold level 2. The nursery receives support from the local authority.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- monitor the consistency of staff responses to their own day-to-day observations about children's progress and those that parents and carers share. This is in order to reflect on the different ways that children learn and provide individual activities to help children make good progress in their learning and development.

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

- extend systems for performance management to include peer-on-peer observations, in order to evaluate and monitor the impact of individual staff's good practice

- provide more opportunities for children to reflect on their successes by decorating the rooms with examples of their creations to maximise children's self-confidence and self-awareness

- support children's movements into school by strengthening the partnership working with school staff.

Inspection judgements

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend
Staff are developing a greater understanding of the learning and development requirements and the need to focus on children's prime and specific areas of learning. Relevant and important information is gathered from parents when children first enter the nursery. This detail is then used well as part of the initial assessment, to help identify what the children know and can do. Following this, staff carry out general observations of children's experiences and use these to inform some accurate assessments. Staff are starting to use the regular information that parents provide in order to further support children's learning. However, there are inconsistencies in this practice. In addition, some staff are less confident in their evaluations of children's progress and in identifying the different ways that children learn. As a result, the variable quality of teaching supports most children to make steady but not consistently good progress. Management staff are aware of this and are conducting training with staff to help them develop their knowledge and skills further. They have recently changed their systems to record observations and assessments in order to improve the links between identified next steps and the planning of activities for all children. They intend to develop this further by monitoring this new way of working to ensure that activities are planned with individual children in mind. Staff make individual records which include some lovely photographs and samples of children's work, and these are shared effectively with parents. There are opportunities for scheduled meetings and daily discussions with their child's key person, which keep parents involved in their child's learning. Parents are also invited to regular stay and play sessions where they can join in with the activities at nursery. This is extended further as parents are encouraged to get involved in fun days and outings. Staff are clear on how to complete effective written summaries for the progress check for children aged between two and three years. This means that a process to identify where a child's progress is less than expected, or to gain external opinions and seek appropriate support at an early stage, is in place.

Children enjoy their time at nursery and appear happy and confident. They are actively engaged in a variety of activities which are both adult and child led. These help to support children for their next stages in learning and prepare them for moving on to school. There are some positive staff interactions and teaching techniques which show an understanding of how to encourage and capture children's curiosities. Furthermore, staff follow the children's interests when providing activities and experiences. For example, children choose if they want to play in their base room, in the art room or outside. Sensory boxes, which include a good range of novel resources and are readily available in each of the rooms, enable children to explore and investigate at their own pace. This is extended further as children enjoy opportunities to use open-ended materials, such as tubes, boxes, cable reels and containers, in a variety of ways. Outside, children enjoy a good range of equipment to support their overall development. For example, they move tyres and crates to make obstacle courses, and decant water from the water butt to make puddles to splash in. Children are becoming more aware of the space they use and positional language as they act out favourite stories, moving over, under and through the large climbing frame. In role play areas they care for 'babies' and take them for walks in the pushchairs. This is extended to the mud kitchen where they prepare food and drink for their 'babies'.

Inside, children enjoy listening to stories and accessing varied books at quiet times through the day. They have some good resources in the art room where they can select to
paint, draw, glue or use varied tools in the sand and water. There are a range of writing and reading materials, such as magazines and chalk boards, and children are encouraged to recognise and write their names. Staff help children to sort, count and compare using coloured figures. They ask simple questions and staff help children to work out who has the most in their selection. Younger children enjoy singing songs and doing action rhymes in their regular music and dance sessions. Staff support these and other movements, such as squeezing play dough and using cutters to make recognisable shapes. In the baby room, they enjoy exploring different textures in the treasures they find in the sensory boxes and bottles. They also enjoy lifting flaps on books and are excited to see what happens when they press buttons and turn dials on the activity toys.

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

Children are happy and settled at the nursery. There are settling-in sessions for all children prior to joining, and staff offer a warm welcome when children arrive every day. As a result, children separate from their parents with ease. Partnerships with parents in regard to children's care needs are clear to see. There is a communication book in place that is used to inform parents of the day's events and for parents to share information from home with staff. Parents talk about how happy they are with the support the staff provide in areas such as the management of health needs, and in the relaxed and welcoming atmosphere. There is useful information displayed for parents and carers, which helps them to be more aware of how the nursery meets the welfare requirements. However, because these displays take up too much wall space there are too few examples of children's creations displayed. This limits opportunities for children and their families to view children's work together, resulting in missed chances for children to understand that their work is valued. This has an impact on their sense of belonging and self-worth.

Movements between nursery rooms are well planned for and children visit their new room prior to starting there. Parents are able to meet the key worker and staff in the new room, and as a result, children move rooms with ease. Staff are developing this for children who are moving on to school. For example, they are working with parents to help children to be emotionally ready by talking with them about this next step.

All children have a key person who has a good relationship with them and their parents and carers. Children have dedicated time with their key person during the day. As a result, children are forming bonds and attachments with the staff. Children's independence is promoted well as they are encouraged to feed themselves, remove or put on their own shoes and coats and tidy away. Older children help to lay the table for meals, pour their own drinks, serve their own food and select when they have snack. This is extended further as children help to cut up fruit and spread crackers, and cooking activities include making nursery puddings. Mealtimes are used well to talk about healthy foods and how eating vegetables helps us to grow. Children also regularly enjoy a buffet-style meal, which helps them to make healthy choices about portion sizes. Furthermore, staff have an increased awareness of health and safety through an improved system to ensure all special dietary requirements are adhered to. For example, specific requirements are displayed within the rooms and marked on children's individual placemats. Children's awareness of their own health and well-being is raised as they are encouraged to wash their hands before meals and after playing outside or using the toilet.
Staff encourage children to enjoy fresh air and exercise as often as possible in their impressive outdoor area. For example, if it is raining they put on waterproofs and take out umbrellas or play in the covered areas. They enjoy planting and tending to vegetables. They grow fruit in the garden and use novel resources to build structures. They also develop good coordination as they negotiate around one another on bikes and scooters or climb on and slide down the equipment. Children play in a secure environment and staff carry out regular daily risk assessments to ensure that hazards are minimised to keep children safe. Children's awareness of personal safety and risks is developing. For example, children are reminded not to run in the nursery, to climb carefully holding on and to tidy toys away in order to clear a space. They are showing care and consideration to others as they help to look after the nursery pets. Staff encourage good behaviour and table manners. For example, children are encouraged to say 'please' and 'thank you' when receiving meals. Children's self-esteem is enhanced as they receive plenty of praise for effort and achievements. They are encouraged to share and take turns with favourite resources. As a result, children behave well and play cooperatively with their friends.

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

Since the last inspection and subsequent monitoring visit, the nursery has made considerable improvements. Children are suitably safeguarded as staff have a clear understanding of their role and responsibilities in child protection. They know how to report concerns, and management ensure that staff read and follow the relevant policies and procedures, with particular focus on whistleblowing and dealing with allegations. There are effective systems in place to ensure that those employed to work with children are vetted by the Disclosure and Barring Service. The effective recruitment procedures ensure staff are suitable to work with children, and new systems make sure staff declare that they remain fit for work. Staff are well deployed, ratios are maintained and suitable contingency arrangements are in place to cover staff absences. There is an improvement to documentation and records shared with parents. For example, procedures for recording and reporting accidents, accurate records of attendance and details of specific allergies and/or dietary requirements are now secure and appropriately monitored by management. Sound induction procedures help staff to form the basis of their understanding of their roles and responsibilities in the nursery. Supervisions and appraisals are in place, providing opportunities for staff to report any concerns they may have, and to develop their own practice. However, there is scope to extend this further through opportunities for staff to observe one another's practice and to visit high quality settings. This is in order to raise the staff's expectations in practice and to continue their ownership of the improvements being made at the nursery.

Staff are making better use of training opportunities in order to support one another in their roles and responsibilities. For example, they have regular staff meetings and use this time to cascade information about events they have attended and to discuss how this can improve practice. Management are keen to gather the views and opinions of others in order to formulate a clear and purposeful evaluation of the nursery. They willingly accept guidance from other early years professionals and have adapted practice following advice.
For example, they are reviewing and adapting the systems in place to observe and assess children's learning and development. This has led to an improvement in the range of experiences offered for individual children and has increased staff's knowledge of planning in order to support progress across all areas of learning. Management are yet to monitor the impact that these changes are having as they are currently working on ensuring consistency in staff practice.

Staff are developing their partnerships with other local providers. For example, they attend network meetings in order to keep abreast of information. Relevant details, such as events and services being offered at the local children's centre, are communicated to parents. Staff also know how important it is to communicate well with other professionals, and in particular others who share the care of children attending. This is in order to provide consistent strategies and work in partnership to meet the growing needs of all children. They are less successful, however, in their partnerships with local schools that children will move on to. They provide valuable information to the teachers about children's progress so far. However, they do not have purposeful dialogue to gain information about school practices so that more support can be given to the children in preparation. For example, staff are yet to make contact with teachers to invite them to visit the nursery so that they are familiar to the children. Staff are currently strengthening their relationships with parents and have invited them to join in meetings, have delivered presentations and set up a parent committee to involve them more in the procedures at nursery. This provides parents with opportunities to express their ideas and opinions, identifying areas of strengths and future development. In addition, views are sought through questionnaires. This information is used to develop practice and is fed back to staff for continuous development. Parents' comments during the inspection show they are happy with the provision. They say that 'Children talk fondly of the staff and of the activities they enjoy' and 'My child is very happy and has formed good relationships with other children and staff'.

The Childcare Register

The requirements for the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are **Met**
What inspection judgements mean

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Registered early years provision</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Judgement</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grade 1</td>
<td>Outstanding</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grade 2</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>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.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grade 3</td>
<td>Requires improvement</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grade 4</td>
<td>Inadequate</td>
<td>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.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Met</td>
<td></td>
<td>The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider continues to meet the requirements for registration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not met</td>
<td></td>
<td>The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider does not meet the requirements for registration.</td>
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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 | 229126 |
| Local authority          | Birmingham |
| Inspection number         | 971379 |
| Type of provision         | Childcare - Non-Domestic |
| Registration category     | |
| Age range of children     | 0 - 8 |
| Total number of places    | 26 |
| Number of children on roll| 37 |
| Name of provider          | Hazel Sheppard |
| Date of previous inspection| 04/12/2013 |
| Telephone number          | 0121 764 5169 |

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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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