

# Acorn Community Nursery

Kingshead Close, Castlefields, Runcorn, Cheshire, WA7 2JE

<b>Inspection date</b>	20/05/2014
Previous inspection date	16/10/2008

<b>The quality and standards of the early years provision</b>	<b>This inspection:</b>	
	Previous inspection:	
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

- Children make choices from a suitable range of age-appropriate activities and resources, indoors and outdoors, which contribute to their learning and development.
- Children are safe and secure because staff have a sufficient understanding of how to safeguard children and keep them safe, by effectively minimising risks.
- Positive relationships with parents are developed through daily discussions about children's care and development and the provision of activities to support home learning. This helps to promote continuity of care and learning for children.

### It is not yet good because

- Arrangements for monitoring and performance management are not focused on improving the quality of teaching. Consequently, this is variable across the nursery and as a result, children's progress is not fully maximised.
- The quality of observations and assessments are inconsistent throughout the nursery. Therefore, progress for some children is difficult to assess and gaps in learning are not being identified and acted upon.
- Independence skills are not always fully promoted to prepare older children in readiness for school.
- The process of self-evaluation is not yet extended to provide the nursery with a clear plan for overcoming weaknesses and identifying areas for further development.

## 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 four playrooms and the outside learning environment.
- The inspector conducted a joint observation with the manager.
- The inspector held meetings with the manager of the nursery and spoke to staff and children throughout the inspection.
- The inspector looked at children's assessment records, planning documentation and a selection of policies and procedures.
- The inspector checked evidence of suitability and qualifications of staff working with children and the provider's self-evaluation form.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents and carers spoken to on the day and from information included in the nursery's own parent survey.

## Inspector

Sharon Lea

## **Full report**

### **Information about the setting**

Acorn Community Nursery was registered in 2000 on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. It is situated in a refurbished infant school in the Castlefields area of Runcorn and is managed by a not for profit committee. The nursery serves the local area and is accessible to all children. It operates from four playrooms and there are enclosed areas available for outdoor play. The nursery employs 23 members of childcare staff. Of these, 17 hold appropriate early years qualifications at levels 2 or 3. In addition, two staff hold early years degrees. The nursery opens Monday to Friday all year round, from 7.30am until 6pm. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 124 children attending, who are in the early years age group. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. The nursery supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

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

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

- improve arrangements for performance management and monitoring of practice to ensure these focus on improving the overall quality of teaching, so that children are consistently challenged to learn more and are supported in making the best possible progress
- improve the quality and consistency of ongoing assessments to ensure that all children are being regularly observed, assessed and monitored and the information is used to support their further learning and development.

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

- promote older children's independence skills further, through enabling them to serve their own meals and set their own place at the table, in preparation for school
- develop further the self-evaluation process, to implement an effective action plan to overcome weaknesses, such as staff monitoring and to identify areas for further development, in order to secure continuous improvement.

## Inspection judgements

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

Staff have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the learning and development requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Some staff observe children during their play, and use the information they gain, to assess individual children's learning and to identify the next steps to support their learning further. This information is used to inform their planning, which includes opportunities to support all areas of learning and identifies activities which will be adult-led. However, observations of all children during play are not being carried out consistently. This results in some children being sufficiently monitored and assessed, and others not, potentially resulting in gaps in learning, which are neither identified nor addressed. Therefore, some children's individual needs are not being appropriately provided for as there is insufficient information available to plan a suitable educational programme, to enable them to make progress in all areas of their learning and development. Consequently, some children are not well-prepared for school or their next stage in learning.

Some of the adult-led activities are fun and exciting, presenting children with a good level of challenge to enhance their development. For example, outdoors, staff organise a game of skittles with older children. This initially involves drawing around their feet to mark where they need to stand. Staff encourage them to identify whose feet are the biggest or smallest. Mathematical understanding continues to be taught by staff, through counting the number of skittles each child knocks down. These are then recorded on the ground with chalk, enabling some children, who wish, to copy the numbers themselves. However, the quality of teaching and this approach to children's learning is not always consistently applied throughout the nursery. As a result, children's learning and progress are not fully maximised. Staff praise children's efforts, as well as their achievements, which helps to raise their self-esteem and as a result, children are motivated to 'have a go'. Children's creativity is promoted appropriately as they choose to play with a variety of art and craft, small world, construction and role-play resources. Older children are familiar with the routines of the setting and readily take part in singing, counting and listening to stories, which promote their readiness for school. Staff read children's favourite stories with expression. This maintains children's interest and develops their communication skills. For example, children eagerly answer when a member of staff asks 'is it better to be nice or nasty?' when reading a favourite story. At the end of the story, children are asked to recall events from the story. This helps them to develop their thinking skills, alongside their confidence in communication. Staff promote communication and language development with children and babies by talking to them about what they are doing and using appropriate facial gestures. For example, while children explore play dough, staff add action words, such as 'press' and 'roll', for children to link their movements to words. Children develop fine handling skills appropriately, as they handle tools to expand their learning. Chalk, paint brushes and play dough tools help younger children to learn how to hold and use tools appropriately.

Staff keep parents appropriately informed of their children's progress. They do this through daily verbal exchanges and parents spoken to at the inspection feel well-informed

about what their child has been doing during their day at the nursery. Regular progress updates give parents an overview of their child's development and staff complete the progress check for children between the ages of two and three years, where appropriate. On settling-in sessions, staff ask parents questions on their child's care needs and some information obtained relates to the child's learning achievements. This supports staff to identify children's starting points, enabling them to plan appropriately for their needs from the outset. Learning at home is well-promoted through the sharing of activity bags, such as the bear hunt and crazy custard. Parents are encouraged to provide feedback on how the activity supported their child's learning and to complete all six activities, receiving a certificate for doing so. Appropriate strategies are in place to care for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Staff work together with other agencies to support children's specific needs.

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

Children share warm relationships with nursery staff, who greet and welcome them and their parents into the nursery, ensuring that children feel valued and cared for. Children demonstrate they have formed secure attachments with staff as they confidently explore the environment and approach staff for a reassuring cuddle when they are tired or upset. Transitions into the nursery are managed well. Children and their families are invited to settling-in sessions to ensure a gradual admission into nursery, which is adapted to meet the individual needs of each child. A key-person system is in place to support children's emotional well-being while they familiarise themselves with their new surroundings. Parents state that they are happy with the nursery, feel welcomed by staff and are confident that staff are meeting their child's care needs. Parents complete detailed registration documents about their child upon entry, which provides staff with meaningful information on the child's care routines, health requirements, allergies, special dietary needs and food preferences. As a result, staff are able to support children's care needs on entry to the nursery. When children are ready to move to the next age room in the nursery, appropriate arrangements are in place to support this and ensure their emotional well-being is maintained. Preparation for children's transition to school generally includes developing their independence and self-help skills and promoting their confidence in skills, such as writing their own name. Arrangements are in place to share children's achievements and reception teachers are welcome to visit the nursery. This helps to support continuity of care and learning for children as they move onto school.

A varied selection of good quality resources are available indoors and outdoors to support children's play experiences. Open shelving and labels on storage boxes and drawers enable children to freely select additional resources to support or extend their learning opportunities. Children behave well and demonstrate respect towards staff and one another. Staff praise them for their efforts when joining in with activities, for sharing with one another and taking turns. Children are encouraged not to run around and to help tidy up and staff give gentle reminders of expected behaviour. Older children are encouraged to use the thinking chair in the room, to reflect upon their behaviour and what they need to do next, if gentle reminders about their behaviour are not heeded. Children are, therefore, aware of boundaries and know what acceptable behaviour is. Parents are kept

fully informed about any adverse behaviour through incident sheets, which are completed by staff if this becomes necessary. Staff promote children's self-help skills and emerging independence well on the whole. For example, children are encouraged to put on their own coats for outdoor play, feed themselves and pour their own drinks. As they get older, they help to clear away their plates and cutlery after meals. However, older children's independence skills are not always fully promoted at mealtimes as they do not set their own places or serve their own meals. This does not, therefore, fully prepare them in readiness for school.

Children's health is promoted through the provision of a clean and spacious environment and good hygiene practices. A variety of meals and snacks are provided that contribute towards children's nutritional health. Children are beginning to learn how to care for themselves and they practise good personal hygiene through consistent routines. They are encouraged to wash their hands at appropriate times, for example, prior to eating meals and after outdoor play. Older children participate in discussions that help them extend their understanding of being healthy. For example, they engage in activities with staff about unhealthy foods which are rich in sugar and preferable alternatives, such as fresh fruit and vegetables. All children have daily opportunities to play outdoors in the fresh air. Many activities are provided outside that encourage children to be active and exercise their bodies. For example, they learn to manoeuvre and ride on bikes and climb on the large equipment. These opportunities enable children to challenge and test out their physical skills, while learning how to keep themselves and others safe. They also spend time outdoors using the large water pump, to play with water on a larger scale than indoors. Consequently, children learn about how to lead a healthy lifestyle, while also having fun. Children learn about the wider world through discussions and activities. They celebrate some cultural and religious festivals and access some resources reflecting positive images of diversity. Resources are set out into areas of play, such as, craft, role play and construction. Children make their own choices about what they want to do, which helps them to develop their independence. They learn how to keep themselves safe. For example, staff give them timely reminders, such as how to sit properly on a chair and support babies in negotiating around the resources in the indoor environment.

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

The manager has a reasonable understanding of her responsibility to comply with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage, to keep children safe. A comprehensive range of policies and procedures, risk assessments and other documentation successfully enable staff to promote children's welfare. Staff are fully aware of the signs which may cause them concern regarding any safeguarding issues, and how to act to protect children. Information shared with parents on entry to the nursery ensures that they are aware of the nursery's policies and procedures. There are appropriate recruitment procedures in place to ensure that staff are suitably qualified, thoroughly vetted and made aware of their roles and responsibilities. New staff go through a thorough induction process, including health and safety, and understanding how to put policies and procedures into practice, which is reviewed throughout their probationary period.

All staff have relevant childcare qualifications and have received training in safeguarding. Some staff are first-aid trained, to attend to any accidents or first-aid needs within the nursery. Further training is accessed through the local authority and also provided in-house, to enable staff to update their knowledge and further develop their skills. Staff have individual supervision sessions with management throughout the year, to discuss the progress of their key children and their own professional development needs. In addition, annual appraisals are in place to reflect upon staff performance and identify areas for their individual future development. However, arrangements for monitoring and performance management are not currently in place to focus on improving the quality of teaching. Consequently, this is variable across the nursery and as a result, children's progress is not fully maximised. The manager has completed a detailed evaluation of the nursery's strengths, incorporating the views of staff and parent feedback from questionnaires. However, this has not been effective in identifying weaknesses, such as the monitoring of staff, nor has it resulted in any action planning for overcoming weaknesses or identifying areas for further development to drive the nursery provision forward.

Partnerships with parents are well-established and parents confirm that they are well-informed about the activities their child has been involved in. Daily written or verbal information and regular progress updates ensure that information is shared frequently about children's care and learning. This enables the nursery and parents to work together to support the individual needs of each child. Additional information is available to parents via newsletters and noticeboards. Close links with other professionals, such as health visitors or speech and language therapists, also ensures that children, who need additional support, receive this to promote their progress. Staff follow programmes, such as speech and language, provided by therapists, with parental consent. Records are kept by staff and shared with parents of support given and to highlight progress, where professionals have identified that this is appropriate for individual children. In addition, staff work closely with the local schools, which supports children who move onto school in becoming familiar with the school environment and their new teachers.

### **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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	303430
<b>Local authority</b>	Halton
<b>Inspection number</b>	968128
<b>Type of provision</b>	
<b>Registration category</b>	Childcare - Non-Domestic
<b>Age range of children</b>	0 - 17
<b>Total number of places</b>	70
<b>Number of children on roll</b>	124
<b>Name of provider</b>	Astmoor Community Project Ltd
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	16/10/2008
<b>Telephone number</b>	01928 576 369

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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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