

Acorns Early Years Centre

Joy House, Franklin Road, Dartford, Kent, DA2 7UZ



Inspection date

28 January 2015

Previous inspection date

9 October 2008

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	Previous inspection:	Good	2
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		Requires improvement	3
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		Requires improvement	3
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		Requires improvement	3
The setting does not meet legal requirements for early years settings			

Summary of key findings for parents

This provision requires improvement. It is not yet good because:

- Management do not know correct procedures to follow in accordance with local safeguarding authorities if an allegation is made against a staff member. This does not safeguard children at all times.
- Management do not always identify weaknesses in staff practice, which results in inconsistent teaching.
- Staff do not always take children's individual learning styles into account when planning or provide appropriate levels of challenge. This does not support children's individual interests or next steps in their learning.

It has the following strengths

- Children with special educational needs are particularly well cared for. Staff work with outside agencies to ensure continuity when working with recommended development strategies for children who need extra support.
- Children play happily in a well-resourced environment and are familiar with daily routines. This shows that children have good attachments with staff and feel secure.
- Staff encourage children in pre-school to be independent with their self-help skills. For example, washing their hands, serving themselves at all meal times and washing up their plate. This helps children to prepare for the next stage of learning at school.
- Staff place a good focus on supporting literacy skills. Staff regularly sit with children of all ages in cosy areas and enjoy sharing a book together.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- ensure management know correct procedures to follow when an allegation is made against a member of staff.

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

- strengthen daily monitoring systems with an emphasis to improve consistency in teaching to extend children's learning
- ensure development opportunities for staff focus more closely on improving a more challenging and interesting environment for children.

To meet the requirements of the Childcare Register the provider must:

- ensure the management know correct procedures to follow when an allegation is made against a member of staff (compulsory part of the Childcare Register)
- ensure the management know correct procedures to follow when an allegation is made against a member of staff (voluntary part of the Childcare Register).

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed children in their play.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation with the manager.
- The inspector spoke with parents to gather their views.
- The inspector sampled policies, records and recruitment procedures.
- The inspector spoke with staff, manager and deputy manager at appropriate times throughout the day.

Inspector

Petra Myatt

Inspection findings

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend. This requires improvement

Staff know their key children well and form secure relationships with them, as a result children are happy in their play. Staff regularly observe children and track their progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. However, they do not ensure planned activities and experiences match the children's needs and challenge them sufficiently, particularly in the toddler unit. Staff implement routines and procedures according to age rather than ability, which means children do not always make good progress in their learning. Staff support pre-school children in their early stages of reading and writing. For example, they begin to recognise the first letter of their name and are encouraged to write the letter with their finger in sand. Staff encourage babies in their communication and language skills well, for example, they look at books together and staff introduce new vocabulary.

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

Staff praise and encourage children regularly to promote children's self-confidence. Staff identify individual needs for very young babies as they cuddle babies to give bottle feds and know signs when babies are tired. This supports young children's well-being. The day prior to inspection, the nursery suffered an arson attack which destroyed a large part of the garden. All children including babies usually enjoy free access to the garden. However, staff continued to support physical development. The older children went for a walk to identify letters and numbers and younger children enjoyed actions songs in their rooms. Staff organise the environment well and this enables children to access resources at their leisure and supports their independence.

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

Management has effective recruitment and vetting procedures to ensure staff are suitable to care for children. Staff know signs to look for to safeguard children however, management do not know the procedures to follow if an allegation is made against a staff member. This does not always safeguard children. The deputy manager spends time in each room working with staff and has identified some areas where they can make improvements. Although management monitor staff practice, they do not always identify variations in teaching. For example, some staff miss opportunities to ask questions which allow children to have their own opinions or work situations out for themselves. Staff attend training and have development opportunities which help them to support children in their care. Partnerships with parents are positive. They receive written assessments, which inform them of their child's progress and any potential learning gaps.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY243975
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	832933
Type of provision	Full-time provision
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 8
Total number of places	80
Number of children on roll	141
Name of provider	Acorns Early Years Centre
Date of previous inspection	9 October 2008
Telephone number	01322 550568

Acorns Early Years Centre Nursery registered in 2003 and is in Dartford, Kent. The provision is situated in the same grounds as a local Community School. The nursery is on the Early Years Register and both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. There are 15 permanent staff members and all have appropriate childcare qualifications. The nursery is open each weekday from 8am to 6pm for 51 weeks of the year. The nursery receives funding for early years education.

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.

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