

Acorn Montessori School

Gerrards Cross Youth Centre, East Common, Gerrards Cross, Buckinghamshire, SL9 7AD



Inspection date

2 June 2015

Previous inspection date

19 October 2011

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
	Previous inspection:	Good	2
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		Outstanding	1
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		Outstanding	1
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		Outstanding	1
The setting meets legal requirements for early years settings			

Summary of key findings for parents

This provision is outstanding

- Management is highly skilled in monitoring children's progress and oversees the excellent teaching strategies. This ensures all children make rapid progress in their development from their starting points, with any gaps in learning closing quickly.
- Overall, staff provide an exciting, stimulating and well-resourced learning environment both indoors and outdoors. As a result, children make rapid progress in the key skills of communication and language, physical and social development.
- Staff promote children's safety and well-being through comprehensive and consistently applied risk assessments. Staffing ratios and good deployment ensures children are cared for in a safe and secure environment.
- Management dedicates time to supporting the professional development of staff and provides individual supervision meetings each term. Together, they identify training needs, which helps to improve their already excellent practice and outcomes for children.
- Partnerships with parents and other professionals are exceptional in meeting all children's needs, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. As a result, children achieve their full potential.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- strengthen further the opportunities already available for children to explore the natural environment to fully extend their understanding of the world around them.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed the quality of teaching in all playrooms and the outdoor learning environment.
- The inspector toured the premises and checked risk assessment procedures.
- The inspector looked at a range of documentation, including children's records, planning documentation, policies and procedures.
- The inspector completed a joint observation with the deputy manager.
- The inspector spoke with some children, staff and parents, and took account of their views.

Inspector

Tanisha Hodge

Inspection findings

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend. This is outstanding

Staff interaction with children is of a consistently high standard. There is a strong emphasis on developing children's communication and language skills and, as a result, the quality of teaching and learning is exceptional. For example, staff asked children to select a book of their choice to look at for a few minutes and to then tell the rest of the group what it was about. Children began sentences with, 'My book is about?' which demonstrated their excellent levels of confidence in talking in front of the group. Following their interests in books, staff model what children say to reinforce their understanding of spoken language. Younger children proceeded to turn the pages to practise their hand and finger control. Staff encourage parents to support children's learning at home extremely well. Parents say that they feel staff listen to them and they express a deep appreciation of how their children are developing skills for their transition to school.

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

Parents are extremely well informed and involved in all aspects of their children's care and development. The strong staff team ethos ensures all staff have an excellent knowledge of every child's needs and interests. Consequently, they meet all children's emotional and physical needs exceptionally well. Children are very well behaved. They remain completely engaged in their play and know what staff expect of them. This is because staff apply boundaries consistently and sensitively across the nursery. Children develop excellent self-help skills. For example, they find their own coats before playing outside. Outdoor learning and activities are available every day so that children can enjoy physical play with the excellent range of resources and activities available. However, there are slightly fewer opportunities for young children to explore features of the natural environment around them to further extend their understanding of the world.

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

The safeguarding of children is a high priority. Management and the highly skilled staff team demonstrate their full understanding of the safeguarding and welfare requirements. Management has effective safe recruitment procedures to ensure the suitability of staff working with the children. Since the last inspection, management has addressed previous recommendations well, which has had a highly positive impact on children's learning and development. Management gathers the views of staff, parents and children to inform self-evaluation. This means that all those involved in the setting contribute to the process to identify strengths and areas to strengthen practice further. Staff have recently attended early speech and language training which has already improved outcomes for children extremely well.

Setting details

Unique reference number	107974
Local authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	839512
Type of provision	Sessional provision
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 8
Total number of places	26
Number of children on roll	59
Name of provider	Juliet Maria Dowman
Date of previous inspection	19 October 2011
Telephone number	01753 885 448

Acorn Montessori School registered in 1994. It operates from the Gerrards Cross Youth Centre, in Gerrards Cross, Buckinghamshire. The group opens five days a week during school term times. Sessions run from 9.15am until 3.15pm. Morning, afternoon and all day sessions are on offer to parents. There are currently nine staff who work directly with the children and the principal who is supernumerary. Staff follow the Montessori ethos and all nine staff hold early years qualifications at level 4. The provider is in receipt of funding for the provision of free early education to children aged two, three and four years.

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