

Inspection of Acorns Community Pre-School

Hanover Hall, Jennings Road, Totton, Southampton, Hampshire SO40 3BA

Inspection date: 5 November 2019

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Good

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

This small and well-qualified staff team has many long-standing members who are completely dedicated towards the opportunities and experiences they provide for the children in their care. New members of staff benefit from coaching and mentoring to learn from their wealth of experience. Staff invest in building strong and successful partnerships with parents. These links are integral to the ethos and commitment of the pre-school for the future progress of each and every child. Parents receive constant updates and reports of their children's development and help to set the next steps for their future learning. Parents are very complimentary of the team and the opportunities and experiences they provide for their children. The leadership team has a clear and ambitious outlook and an evolving curriculum that changes in line with the characteristics and changing interests of the children. There are high expectations for all children from dedicated key persons and a whole-team approach. Staff are patient, kind and knowledgeable. They help children to settle quickly into the daily routines and to build a strong sense of belonging. Children display close and strong bonds with all staff members. They behave well, receiving consistent guidance and explanations.

What does the early years setting do well and what does it need to do better?

- The manager, who is also the nominated individual, makes effective use of the self-evaluation process. She values the views and comments of parents, children and the staff to help identify areas for improvement. There are firm plans in place to renovate parts of the garden area. For example, a sheltered area is being developed to support the children's enthusiasm for outdoor play.
- Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those who receive additional funding, make steady progress. There is a targeted approach towards their future learning. Strong professional partnerships and good information sharing with other agencies support these children to reach their full potential.
- Staff receive professional development opportunities that help them to improve their knowledge and understanding. Recent training on managing children's behaviour has helped staff to support children further in gaining important social skills. The leadership team has made changes to the way they supervise and observe staff practice. This has already had a significant impact on how they reflect on their own teaching practice.
- Children have many opportunities to play outdoors and to be physically active. They are learning to balance and negotiate large equipment and have a growing awareness of their own abilities. Children take part in sensory activities in the garden. For example, they become excited as they search for 'treasure' in shaving foam and swirl glittery water around to make patterns.
- Staff encourage and support the increasing communication and language

development of children. Younger children are learning new and more challenging words and older children are given time to answer questions, to give their own views and suggestions. However, staff do not make the most of the wide variety of books available by helping children to have easier independent access. This inhibits the way children use books to help them to find out facts and additional information as they play and learn.

- Children are learning to take calculated risks in their play. For instance, children use real woodwork tools to cut and drill. They persevere and follow instructions well as they use a small hacksaw to cut pieces of wood. Although children are engaged and willing participants, most-able children are not given further levels of challenge to help them to build on the skills they are developing.
- Staff closely track and monitor the progress that children are making. They swiftly identify potential gaps in children's learning to provide additional support if required. Staff use the changing interests and likes of the children to precisely plan for more experiences in their play.
- Children are using early mathematics in their play and are given time to solve problems together. For example, they use large shapes that they rotate around until they fit together. Children enjoy weighing ingredients as they make pretend cupcakes and are learning about volume and capacity as they make wheels spin when pouring water.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a culture of vigilance amongst the staff. They have a good understanding of how to identify potential signs and symptoms of abuse and the procedures they would use to report any concerns. This helps to support the welfare of children. The manager uses robust recruitment processes, which helps to guarantee the suitability of staff who work directly with the children. Staff receive opportunities to update their knowledge of wider and changing safeguarding issues, such as protecting children from radicalisation and how to gain an awareness of using early technology. Staff use thorough risk assessments to keep children safe and secure at all times when playing outdoors.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- review planned activities to add more challenge to fully support the learning of most-able children
- enable children to see and use books more freely and independently to help support their learning.

Setting details

Unique reference number	507856
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	10063347
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children	2 to 4
Total number of places	32
Number of children on roll	39
Name of registered person	Acorns Community Pre-School Limited
Registered person unique reference number	RP522611
Telephone number	02380 668234
Date of previous inspection	10 February 2016

Information about this early years setting

Acorns Community Pre-School opened in 1989. It operates from a community hall in Totton, near Southampton, Hampshire. The pre-school opens five days a week during school term time. Sessions are from 8.30am until 3.30pm from Monday to Friday. It provides funded early education for children aged two, three and four years. The pre-school employs 10 members of childcare staff. Five of these hold early years qualifications at level 3 and the joint supervisors hold level 4 National Vocational Qualifications.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Gwendolyn Andrews

Inspection activities

- The inspector conducted a learning walk with one of the supervisors and discussed the process of evaluation, how the curriculum for children's learning is planned and the current areas identified for improvement.
- The inspector observed the teaching and learning indoors and outdoors, and the impact on the development of the children. The inspector spoke directly to parents and took their comments and written views into consideration.
- Discussions were held with staff and the children at appropriate times. The inspector also spoke to staff about their knowledge of safeguarding and the procedures in place for reporting any concerns.
- The supervisor and the inspector completed a joint observation. The inspector also held a leadership meeting with the manager.
- A range of documentation was sampled, including suitability checks, recruitment files and professional development plans.

We carried out this inspection 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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