

Inspection of Acorns Nursery School Ltd

10 Park Street, CIRENCESTER, Gloucestershire GL7 2BN

Inspection date: 28 July 2021

| Overall effectiveness | Requires improvement |
|--|-----------------------------|
| The quality of education | Requires improvement |
| Behaviour and attitudes | Requires improvement |
| Personal development | Requires improvement |
| Leadership and management | Requires improvement |
| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | Good |

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision requires improvement

Children demonstrate that they feel safe and secure at the setting. Staff provide a welcoming learning environment. Children are confident to access resources independently and make choices in their play.

Staff implement effective strategies to support children's positive behaviour. They encourage children to talk about their feelings and emotions, and to share and take turns. Older children show respect for adults, their peers, and resources. They develop friendships and play well together.

Children develop their self-care and independence skills. They benefit from healthy food. Babies learn to feed themselves. Older children show competence using cutlery and can put on their coats and wellington boots before they go outside to play. Staff sit with children and babies during snack and mealtimes and chat to them to promote language and social skills.

All children have plenty of opportunities to play outdoors. They develop their physical skills. Babies crawl over low apparatus and pull themselves to standing, strengthening the muscles in their legs. Older children kick balls, climb in the tree-house and balance on logs. Staff support pre-school children effectively to develop their small-muscle skills, for instance, as children use scissors to cut out pictures for their farm maps.

Due to the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic, the nursery has reduced the time parents are in the setting, to keep children safe. Staff share information with parents about their children's care, learning and development using an electronic system, alongside discussions on arrival and collection.

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

- The provider encourages managers and staff to develop their knowledge and skills. They receive regular supervision meetings and appraisals. The provider is aware of the main pressures that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on staff and provides them with ongoing support. The provider and manager reflect on the quality of the provision regularly to identify and make improvements. There are plans to enhance the outdoor area to further support children's learning across the curriculum. However, the provider and manager have not identified weaknesses in practice in the baby room.
- Staff work with parents effectively to meet babies' care routines to provide continuity. However, staff do not consistently deploy themselves well enough to engage with babies to increase their enjoyment and learning. At times, some babies spend long periods with no interaction from staff and play alone or move

aimlessly around the room.

- Staff do not always use what they know about babies to plan and provide purposeful and appropriately challenging activities. For instance, on the day of the inspection, staff had set up a mark-making activity with inappropriate tools for babies' developmental stages and babies quickly lost interest.
- Pre-school children are motivated to learn. Staff use their interests and what they need to learn next, to plan a range of interesting activities to help them achieve. For example, children recognise written numerals on sticks and count out acorns to match the numbers. Staff role model mathematical language effectively and encourage children to think about capacity. Children say they need 350 spades of sand and they laugh together when staff ask them if they can think of a smaller number.
- Staff make good use of opportunities to develop pre-school children's understanding of the world. Children show high levels of curiosity as they examine a spider with staff and talk about its characteristics. Staff extend children's thinking skills well, such as when they ask them why they think the spider can climb up the post without falling off.
- Older children develop good listening and concentration skills in readiness for school. They learn to recognise their names and are beginning to form letters and sound out phonics. Staff encourage children to take pride in their achievements to boost their levels of self-esteem and confidence.
- Pre-school children gain good communication and language skills. Children develop their imaginations and engage in role play with their friends. For example, they pretend they are princesses and queens, and say they are making dark chocolate when they mix water and mud together. They listen well as staff read stories. Staff extend children's thinking and language skills, such as asking them what will happen next. Staff share books with babies, although they do not always use the correct words for things to fully support babies developing language. Nevertheless, babies enjoy song times and explore musical instruments enthusiastically.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The provider uses robust recruitment processes to ensure the suitability of staff for their role. Staff have a suitable knowledge and understanding of child protection and wider safeguarding issues. The designated safeguarding lead is proactive in her role. Staff know what to do and who to contact should they have any concerns about a child or adult. Staff show children respect. For example, they give babies an explanation about why they need to change their trousers because they are wet from water play and talk to babies as they change their nappies.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

To meet the requirements of the early years foundation stage, the provider must:

| | Due date |
|--|-----------------|
| improve staff deployment in the baby room, to ensure staff engage with babies to extend their learning and development | 03/09/2021 |
| support staff to improve planning in the baby room to ensure activities are purposeful and pitched at the right level to meet their individual next steps in learning. | 03/09/2021 |

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

- ensure staff use the correct words when talking to babies to support their developing communication and language skills.

Setting details

| | |
|--|---|
| Unique reference number | EY369943 |
| Local authority | Gloucestershire |
| Inspection number | 10202744 |
| 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 at time of inspection | 0 to 4 |
| Total number of places | 66 |
| Number of children on roll | 77 |
| Name of registered person | Acorns Nursery School Limited |
| Registered person unique reference number | RP527779 |
| Telephone number | 01285 655 505 |
| Date of previous inspection | 29 September 2016 |

Information about this early years setting

Acorns Nursery School Ltd registered in 2005 and is situated in the centre of Cirencester, Gloucestershire. The nursery opens on Monday to Friday, from 8am to 5.45pm, all year round. The nursery employs 14 members of childcare staff, including the manager and deputy manager. Of these, 12 hold relevant early years qualifications from level 3 to level 6. The owner has a teaching qualification and early years professional status. The nursery also employs a chef and a maintenance person. The nursery receives funding for the provision of free early education for children aged three and four years.

Information about this inspection

Inspector
Karen Allen

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the setting received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the setting and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the setting.
- The provider and the inspector completed a learning walk together around the setting.
- The inspector observed activities and the quality of staff's interactions with children. She talked to the provider, managers and staff at appropriate times throughout the inspection.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation of an activity with the provider.
- Children talked to the inspector about their play and activities.
- The inspector viewed a range of documents, including Disclosure and Barring Service records, paediatric first-aid certificates, the safeguarding policy and children's records.

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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