

# Inspection of Acorns Early Years Centre

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

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Inspection date: 27 October 2021

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
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The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
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Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
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Personal development	<b>Good</b>
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Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
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Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good
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## **What is it like to attend this early years setting?**

### **The provision is good**

Children, including those who are new to the nursery, settle well on arrival. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, key staff now greet all children and their families warmly at the nursery's main entrance. On arrival, children confidently leave their parents and eagerly seek out enjoyable activities in their base rooms. Older babies' individual care needs are met well. Staff show respect and consideration when asking them whether they are ready for a nappy change. This has a positive impact on children's confidence and emotional well-being. Children develop good levels of independence. For instance, during group activities, toddlers recognise themselves in photos and proudly place them on a self-registration board. Pre-school children understand their opinions are important to staff and confidently share their ideas. They engage in meaningful conversations about their drawings and eagerly share their thoughts on items in a curiosity box. Staff are positive role models and have high expectations for children's behaviour. As a result, children show kindness and consideration for each other as they happily share and take turns, such as when using sand play equipment. Older children demonstrate good listening skills and follow nursery routines with minimal disruption. They receive clear guidance from staff during daily routines so that they know when to bring their chosen play to an end.

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

- The management team has effective processes in place for the monitoring of children's play and learning. The team identified that some children do not always want to play outdoors. This resulted in staff providing a range of activities indoors, including shaving foam and toy dinosaurs for children to explore. This helps to provide good experiences for all children's needs.
- The management team is totally committed to the care and education of all children. The team constantly reflects on the curriculum intent to raise the quality of the educational programmes. Staff receive regular supportive feedback on their everyday practice and there is a positive culture of professional development. For example, staff have completed training on how to provide an enabling indoor environment for children.
- Numeracy skills are well supported across the nursery. Staff introduce mathematical language and use it effectively throughout the day. For instance, they use positional language as children play with sand. Older children are encouraged to problem solve. They discover how to calculate the number of play bricks they need when building, and they take pride in their achievements.
- Staff place a good emphasis on supporting children's communication and language skills. Babies enjoy exploring picture books. Toddlers excitedly join in action songs, and pre-school children explore the illustrations and narratives of books. However, younger children are not consistently supported in the teaching

of new words to develop their vocabulary.

- Staff are attentive to children's needs. They help younger children to master new skills, such as putting on their own coats. However, children have to wait for everyone to be ready before going outdoors to play. This impacts on the learning opportunities that they can have outside.
- Staff who support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities have a clear understanding of their role. They work closely with parents and seek support from other professionals. Staff use the knowledge gained to great effect to ensure that each child has the appropriate support. This helps to ensure that children's needs are met and gaps in their learning close as quickly as possible.
- Children delight in their outdoor play. They skilfully manoeuvre tricycles, negotiate uneven surfaces and balance on stepping stones. Children's oral health is well supported. They explore the importance of brushing their teeth and confidently identify healthy food options, such as carrots and apples. This helps children to learn self-care skills.
- Parents speak highly of the nursery and form good relationships with staff. Parents speak positively about how staff have provided ideas on activities they could do at home during the COVID-19 pandemic. They found these very helpful. Parents say that they feel informed about their children's progress and receive daily updates.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff demonstrate a secure understanding of how to keep children safe. They know the signs which may indicate that a child is at risk of harm. This includes knowledge of wider safeguarding issues, such as domestic violence and the 'Prevent' duty. Staff understand how to report concerns. The manager follows safer recruitment processes to ensure that staff are suitable and have the skills required. Staff complete regular risk assessments to help to identify and minimise any hazards that may arise. They make clear records of any accidental injuries that children may have and share this information with parents.

## **What does the setting need to do to improve?**

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

- develop teaching of communication and language to extend and increase young children's vocabulary
- review the organisation of some daily routines so that children do not spend time waiting for others before going outside to play.

## Setting details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	EY243975
<b>Local authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	10210679
<b>Type of provision</b>	Childcare on non-domestic premises
<b>Registers</b>	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
<b>Day care type</b>	Full day care
<b>Age range of children at time of inspection</b>	0 to 8
<b>Total number of places</b>	80
<b>Number of children on roll</b>	145
<b>Name of registered person</b>	Acorns Early Years Centre
<b>Registered person unique reference number</b>	RP520995
<b>Telephone number</b>	01322 550568
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	6 September 2018

## Information about this early years setting

Acorns Early Years Centre registered in 2006. It operates from a self-contained building on the site of Maypole School, Dartford, Kent. The nursery employs 32 members of staff. Of these, 23 hold early years qualifications at level 2 or above. The manager holds a relevant qualification at level 5. The nursery is open from Monday to Friday for 51 weeks of the year. Sessions are from 7.30am to 6pm. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

## Information about this inspection

### Inspector

Janet Thouless

## Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the provider received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the provider and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the nursery.
- The manager, deputy manager and inspector had a learning walk together.
- The inspector carried out joint observations with the manager and deputy manager, spoke with staff and interacted with children.
- The inspector viewed documents relating to risk assessments.
- Parents shared their views about the nursery with the inspector.

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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