

Inspection of Acorns Playgroup Ltd

Bilton Grange CP School, Bilton Lane, Harrogate, North Yorkshire HG1 3BA

Inspection date: 2 February 2022

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
The quality of education	Outstanding
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is outstanding

Children excitedly enter the safe and vibrant pre-school. They are happy and have excellent attachments to staff, who warmly welcome them. Children settle immediately, eager to start playing. They show the highest levels of confidence and self-esteem. Staff kept in excellent contact with families during the COVID-19 pandemic. This supported children's continued learning and emotional well-being. For example, staff encouraged families to take part in activity challenges, communicated using video, read stories and sang songs.

Children are deeply engrossed in a limitless range of first-class activities and experiences. They make impressive progress and develop a thirst for learning and a wealth of skills and knowledge. Children's interests and ideas are at the heart of staff's thinking when they implement the curriculum. For example, children make their own 'animal facts' booklet and create an erupting volcano. They also design and build their own pirate ship and make treasure maps, telescopes and hats.

Children demonstrate exemplary behaviour and play extremely well together. They solve problems while building impressive constructions, excitedly dig for 'treasure' in the large sand pit and make 'Chinese noodles' in the exploratory kitchen. Older children play a mathematical card game skilfully and ensure everyone plays fairly and follows the rules. Children are supported well to be respectful, kind and caring. For example, when the Australian bush fires threatened native animals, they were involved in sponsoring a koala.

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

- Children are supported superbly from the outset. For example, staff undertake home visits to support excellent settling-in programmes for children. Parents provide a wealth of information to help staff put together a full picture of children's development and skills before they start. Staff use this exceptionally well to tailor individualised visits to the pre-school, based on each child's specific needs.
- Staff methodically monitor and carefully consider how they will support children's learning. They skilfully capture children's progress through unique learning stories. Parents share information and photographs of many aspects of children's home lives. Staff complement and expertly build on children's learning and experiences, raising their achievements to a very high level.
- Staff have very high aspirations for all children. They swiftly identify any possible developmental delays and secure first-rate early interventions to help children to catch up. Staff provide intensive support for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Parents receive high-quality information and staff inspire them to support their

children's learning at home, for example by planting sunflower seeds and recording their growth. Staff help children to develop an awareness of positive role models within their families. For instance, they plan specific activity days to actively engage male figures in children's lives.

- Staff expertly promote children's emotional well-being and communication skills. They use a wealth of speech and language tools and programmes. For example, staff create visual aids to help overcome communication barriers and create a willow tree to support language in a more secure space. Staff ring a bell to indicate changes to the daily routine and use sand timers to support excellent turn taking.
- Staff continually expand children's learning, including through the use of online videos. Children learn how to make paper aeroplanes and note different shades of colours as they create self-portraits. Staff use mathematical language and highlight patterns and shapes, such as a 'pentagon', as children skilfully build complex three-dimensional structures.
- Staff enhance the environment to ignite children's ideas, stimulate conversations and help them to remember learning. For example, they display photographs of famous buildings from around the world in the construction area. Staff photograph children's wonderful creations, such as a robot made from boxes.
- Staff deepen children's knowledge expertly. For example, when creating their 'animal facts' booklets, children used an app-based interactive globe and the internet to research information. They printed off and cut out pictures and wrote the names of each animal. Children obtained astounding unique facts about a multitude of animals.
- Staff provide excellent opportunities for physical activity. Children carefully balance on tree stumps, crates, tyres and planks. They have great fun rolling hoops and swirling ribbon wands to Chinese music.
- Children develop a great love of books, songs and rhymes. Staff reinforce favourite stories, such as 'The Gingerbread Man', through ample activities, including baking. They provide each child with the book of the week to take home, and parents share videos of children retelling stories with great recall.
- Self-evaluation is exemplary and leads to comprehensive improvement plans, such as introducing 'stay and play' sessions and parents' evenings. The members of the already highly qualified and experienced staff team have an admirable passion and dedication to their continued professional development.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff give the utmost priority to keeping children safe. They complete yearly child protection training and managers undertake more advanced training. Staff have an in-depth knowledge of indicators of abuse and how to report concerns. They work extremely closely with other agencies, if required, to promote children's welfare and support families. Policies, procedures and practices are strengthened, for instance by implementing safeguarding audits. Staff undertake meticulous risk assessments to promote children's health and safety. This includes those which

help to minimise the spread of COVID-19. Staff share safety information with parents, such as how to minimise choking hazards. They closely supervise children as they approach risks and challenges with exceptional confidence.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY415533
Local authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	10131606
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	2 to 4
Total number of places	24
Number of children on roll	30
Name of registered person	Acorns Playgroup Ltd
Registered person unique reference number	RP530064
Telephone number	07952963186
Date of previous inspection	3 May 2016

Information about this early years setting

Acorns Playgroup Ltd re-registered in 2010 and is situated in Harrogate, North Yorkshire. The pre-school employs five members of childcare staff. Of these, three hold a qualification at level 3, one holds early years teacher status and one has a qualification at level 7. The pre-school opens Monday to Friday during term time only from 8.45am to 3.15pm. It provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector
Rachel Ayo

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 provider.
- The inspector held discussions with the pre-school owners, two of whom jointly manage the pre-school. She carried out a learning walk with one of the managers. This helped the inspector to understand how they organise the early years provision and the curriculum.
- The inspector observed the quality of education indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact of this on children's learning.
- The inspector and one of the managers carried out a joint observation of an activity.
- The inspector spoke with children, parents and staff during the inspection. She also viewed written feedback from parents.
- The inspector held regular meetings with the managers throughout the inspection, to keep them updated. She also looked at various policies and documents, including those related to the suitability and qualifications of staff, records of learning and self-improvement 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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