

# Inspection of Acorn Day Nursery (Stony Stratford)

The Stables, Vicarage Road, Stony Stratford, Milton Keynes MK11 1BN

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Inspection date: 23 March 2022

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
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The quality of education	<b>Outstanding</b>
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Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Outstanding</b>
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Personal development	<b>Outstanding</b>
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Leadership and management	<b>Outstanding</b>
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Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not applicable
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## **What is it like to attend this early years setting?**

### **The provision is outstanding**

The curriculum for children is highly ambitious and runs through the whole setting with seamless fluency. Excellent first-hand experiences help children to learn about their local community. They visit the local high street and are fascinated by taking washing to the launderette. Previously, children have taken exciting trips by bus and train. To follow children's interest in maps, staff supported them to plot their journey. These activities successfully encourage children to gain a sense of the bigger, outside world.

Children take part in activities that are highly stimulating and exciting. During an activity mixing 'potions' in the garden, they practise mixing different media together to try to create a volcano. Children try different mixtures to create the best effect. Staff are careful to allow them to try and sometimes fail as they learn from the experience and persevere to try again. This builds children's resilience and deepens their understanding. Eventually they squeal with excitement as the frothy mixture whooshes into the air. Children make particularly impressive progress in their communication and language skills.

All children demonstrate that they are independent and capable. In the baby room, children help staff to wipe over tables in preparation for lunch. Older children pour themselves a drink and demonstrate an impressive ability to work together, negotiating ideas for play. The nursery atmosphere is calm, and children explore and move with a sense of confidence and purpose. All children's behaviour is excellent. They show consistently high levels of engagement and interest, sustaining their concentration and making huge leaps in their development.

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

- Nursery staff are wholeheartedly committed to the curriculum of learning. The intention is for children to build resilience, share their thinking and explore through first-hand experiences. The huge array of exciting opportunities on offer for children stimulate their enthusiasm for learning and create an atmosphere buzzing with excitement.
- Babies explore through sensory learning. For example, they mix cornflour with slices of lemon and lime. Older children compare the smell of lemongrass and slices of lemon, and add these as they make dough. This gives children opportunities to touch, taste and smell as they discover the natural world around them.
- Support for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities is superb. Staff quickly identify if children need extra support with their learning. Their swift action, taking account of information they exchange with other settings children attend and parents, ensures children receive targeted support. The

resulting highly precise support children receive quickly helps to close gaps in learning. Children make excellent progress and develop into confident and sociable individuals.

- Staff have developed links with the local retirement centre. This includes, in the past, children and residents eating tea together. During the enforced separation of the COVID-19 lockdown, children made banners to hang in the garden, telling the residents how much they missed them. Staff took children for walks to the windows of the retirement centre so children could wave and sing to residents. This helped to sustain these vital relationships with the local community and continues to provide children with boundless opportunities to make meaningful connections with others.
- Staff encourage children to learn from and with nature, and this is particularly beneficial for children's well-being. There is a calmness at the nursery and children are relaxed and joyful in their learning. During nap times, children sleep outside, listening to the sound of bird song and feeling the gentle, warm breeze as they fall soundly asleep.
- Outdoor learning for children is highly impressive. Staff build on safety lessons over time, accumulating in children eventually being able to use flint to start the fire and use tools, such as bow saws, to cut wood. Children become adept and confident in their abilities.
- The ambitious manager leads the nursery extremely well. Staff respect her and praise the excellent coaching and supervision they receive. Staff undertake training that enhances their knowledge and this has a direct positive impact on the quality of their teaching.
- Parents express how happy they are with the care that their children receive. Children develop close relationships with their key people, and parents feel that the nursery staff support the whole family. Excellent initiatives, such as home visits and learning resources for children to take home, further strengthen these brilliant relationships.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff demonstrate that they all, including newer staff, have a deep awareness of their role and responsibility in relation to keeping children safe. Staff are alert to any indications that children might be at risk of harm and take immediate and decisive action to report any concerns. Those with overall responsibility for safeguarding have clear lines for reporting and fully understand their responsibilities to refer concerns to the local safeguarding partnership. There is a thorough recruitment process to ensure that those who work with children are suitable to do so. Staff supervise children closely and are watchful when they are engaging in risky activities, such as using tools and equipment.

## Setting details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	EY563288
<b>Local authority</b>	Milton Keynes
<b>Inspection number</b>	10191378
<b>Type of provision</b>	Childcare on non-domestic premises
<b>Registers</b>	Early Years Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
<b>Day care type</b>	Full day care
<b>Age range of children at time of inspection</b>	0 to 4
<b>Total number of places</b>	40
<b>Number of children on roll</b>	78
<b>Name of registered person</b>	Acorn Early Years Foundation
<b>Registered person unique reference number</b>	RP901362
<b>Telephone number</b>	07889540737
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not applicable

## Information about this early years setting

Acorn Day Nursery (Stony Stratford) registered in 2018 and is based in Stony Stratford, Milton Keynes. The nursery employs 12 members of childcare staff. Of these, nine hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 and above. The nursery opens from Monday to Friday all year round. Sessions are from 7.30am until 6.15pm. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

## Information about this inspection

### Inspector

Hayley Marshall-Gowen

## 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 observed the implementation of the curriculum during activities indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact this has on children's learning.
- A joint observation was completed and discussed with the manager.
- During the inspection, the inspector held a meeting with the manager. She looked at relevant documentation, such as evidence of the suitability of staff working in the pre-school.
- The inspector spoke with staff and children at suitable times throughout the inspection.
- Parents were invited to share their views with the inspector. Several parents discussed their views during the inspection and the inspector took account of all feedback received.

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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