

Inspection of Acorns Pre-School

Cockington Primary School, Old Mill Road, Torquay, Devon TQ2 6AP

Inspection date: 31 March 2022

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

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children make good progress from when they first start in this friendly and nurturing pre-school. Staff know children extremely well and they ensure activities meet their interests to keep them engaged. Children show high levels of confidence when using large outdoor equipment. They stack plastic milk crates and add wooden planks to create a small obstacle course. Children learn how to manage age-appropriate risks and show excellent physical skills as they climb and balance.

Children behave exceptionally well. They are highly respectful of adults and peers alike, always showing care and empathy. For instance, children quickly seek out an adult when one of their peers falls over, to ensure their well-being. When children arrive or leave the pre-school, their peers always greet them warmly or say goodbye.

Children and staff have formed excellent relationships. Staff know the strategies that help individual children settle quickly and use these effectively. Consequently, children are quick to be actively involved in the wide range of activities upon arrival. Staff have high expectations for children. As a result, children are consistently motivated, curious and willing to try new things.

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

- Parents speak positively about the pre-school. They comment on how staff make children feel welcome and how approachable they are. Parents talk about how staff help to meet children's needs and how online systems enable them to see information about children's development.
- Staff encourage children to develop their independence skills. At snack time, children confidently pour their own drinks. They spread butter on their bread, cut up their fruit and then wash and dry their dishes afterwards. Children develop excellent autonomy skills.
- The planning of the curriculum helps children to learn new skills. Children have specific times with their key person to help build on their current abilities. For instance, younger children learn to be independent in putting their shoes on. Older children learn about different 2D shapes and enjoy going on a 'shape hunt' around the pre-school. However, staff do not consistently build on the older children's knowledge during free play to help extend their mathematical development even further.
- Staff promote children's language skills effectively. They provide a comprehensive communication programme to ensure children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good progress. Coupled with sign language and visual cues, children develop strong communication skills.

- Children develop a good understanding of the world and the surrounding community. They take regular visits to the beach, local shops and the train station. Staff help children learn about other countries, such as Uganda, and encourage them to take part in cultural activities, including African drumming. Children learn how everyone is unique.
- The pre-school has formed some relationships with other professionals. They liaise effectively with local speech therapists and offer a wealth of information for parents where required. However, the partnership with the local school is not as effective. Although the pre-school provides detailed information about children's needs to the school, children do not always settle as quickly as they could.
- Children enjoy growing their own food produce. They plant beans, sweetcorn, strawberries and pumpkins. Children confidently talk to their peers about whose bean has grown the tallest and those that are yet to sprout.
- Leaders have a strong ambition to improve the pre-school. They have invited professional consultants into the setting. They liaise with online app developers to improve the communication system that shares children's developmental progress with parents.
- Staff comment that the leadership team highly supports them. They can access counselling services if required and have regular supervision meetings to discuss their personal and professional life.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The premises are secure. Closed-circuit television, electronic keypad systems and double-handled doors help to ensure children's safety. Leaders and staff use walkie talkies to communicate to each other between rooms and in the outdoor areas. They have a good understanding of child protection, including the signs of extreme views and behaviours. They are alert to changes in children's behaviour and other threats that indicate a child may be at risk. Leaders and staff know how to contact local safeguarding partners to help protect children from harm. Children have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe. They know to hold onto the rope as they climb up into the tree.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- ensure staff build on children's existing mathematical skills to help them make even more progress in this area
- further develop partnerships with the on-site school to ensure a consistent two-way flow of information in order to meet children's needs so that they settle more quickly when starting school.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY278160
Local authority	Torbay
Inspection number	10124471
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	2 to 4
Total number of places	68
Number of children on roll	107
Name of registered person	Stephens, Deborah
Registered person unique reference number	RP513673
Telephone number	01803 217863
Date of previous inspection	19 June 2013

Information about this early years setting

Acorns Pre-School registered in 2003 operates from purpose-built rooms within Cockington Primary School. Care is available to children Monday to Friday from 8am to 6pm, which includes a breakfast club and after-school club, during term time only. During school holidays, the pre-school opens from 8am to 5.30pm. The pre-school receives free early education funding for children aged two, three and four years. There are 17 members of staff who work directly with the children, 16 of whom hold appropriate childcare qualifications.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Joanne Steward

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 nominated person took the inspector on a learning walk and discussed the curriculum and what they want children to learn.
- The inspector and the manager carried out a joint observation of a mathematical activity.
- Children spoke to the inspector about what they like to do at pre-school.
- The inspector spoke to parents and looked at written documentation to gain their views of the pre-school.
- A sample of key documentation was looked at by the inspector, including staff suitability and their qualifications.

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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