

Inspection of Acorn Child Care UK

Headlands Primary School, Bushland Road, Northampton, Northamptonshire NN3
2NS

Inspection date: 10 August 2022

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous
inspection Outstanding

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

When children arrive at this busy nursery, they receive a warm cheery welcome from the staff. Children develop a sense of belonging and have secure attachments to their key people. All children, including babies, separate easily from their parents. Babies easily transfer to the arms of staff in the Sunflowers room. In the Bluebells room, two-year-olds greet staff, exclaiming, 'We've missed you,' and in the Evergreen room, three- and four-year-olds are keen to explore outside in the forest school.

Children enjoy being active and have a range of opportunities which allow them to move themselves and their toys around. For example, babies climb up low steps and roll balls to one another, and four-year-olds race each other in a running game and enjoy learning to walk backwards. Children are positive towards learning and show a can-do attitude. They confidently solve problems, working hard to balance on a rope ladder and navigate how to get back down once they have reached the top. Babies enjoy stacking blocks and they are learning to share with each other. Children develop positive relationships with one another and as a result, their emotional well-being is supported and they feel safe and secure.

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

- An effective key-person system is in place. Staff identify what they want children to learn based on their observations of children's achievements and knowledge of each child. They plan based on children's interests and their experiences from home. This helps them to provide personalised settling-in procedures and smooth transitions between nursery rooms, to ensure that all children settle quickly and are ready to learn.
- Parents speak highly about their own and their children's experiences at the nursery. They say that they receive good-quality verbal and electronic feedback about their children's learning. Parents feel that the manager and staff go 'above and beyond' to meet the needs of the children. They are confident that their children are safe and are very well cared for.
- Staff say this is a good place to work. They feel that the manager values them as individuals and has a high regard for their well-being. Staff have regular supervision sessions and appraisal meetings with the manager, which help them to create plans for their individual professional development.
- Overall, staff promote children's communication and language skills well. They use stories, songs and games to encourage children to talk and to understand new ideas. For example, at group time, four-year-olds talk about holidays and explore the different languages they know. They are excited to discover that they know the French word for 'hello' and confidently talk together about the other countries they have visited. However, children's experiences of hearing

properly pronounced English are inconsistent. For example, staff sometimes use informal language instead of real words when talking to babies, limiting their exposure to correctly spoken English.

- Children enjoy playing and learning together. Two-year-olds delight in lying on the floor with staff to share stories and musical books. They laugh and join in when staff sing to them after lunch, listening as their friends choose whose turn it is next. Babies clamber into the water tray together, waiting for their turn to hold an ice cube. However, when activities like water play and teeth cleaning become very busy, it is difficult for staff to manage children's play. This means that staff sometimes miss opportunities to teach children how to use resources appropriately.
- Staff develop a rich curriculum for children that encourages them to investigate and explore. Staff use familiar materials to engage children's curiosity and encourage them to test out what they already know. Children of all ages enjoy playing with water, sand and dough. Four-year-olds explore water and ice. They understand that ice is frozen water and that when ice melts, it becomes water again. Children try to use hammers to break ice cubes to find the treasure hidden inside them. They experiment with different ways to break the ice before deciding to try melting it in warm water.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff demonstrate a good understanding of safeguarding and they know about the signs and symptoms of abuse. Staff know how to record and report any concerns to the designated safeguarding lead for the nursery. Managers require all staff to complete regular training to ensure their knowledge of safeguarding issues remains current and up to date. Daily risk assessments in the nursery are effective. The premises are secure and well maintained, which contributes to keeping children safe. Appropriate checks of staff occur at the point of employment and on an ongoing basis, which helps to ensure staff are, and remain, suitable to work with children.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- help staff to continue to build on their knowledge and awareness of how to interact with all children, including babies, to ensure they consistently extend their communication and language skills further
- strengthen staff's teaching practice, specifically around the management of busy activities.

Setting details

Unique reference number	220111
Local authority	West Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10138627
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	1 to 4
Total number of places	120
Number of children on roll	55
Name of registered person	Acorn Childcare (UK)
Registered person unique reference number	RP520701
Telephone number	01604 415362
Date of previous inspection	17 May 2016

Information about this early years setting

Acorn Child Care UK registered in 1992 and is located in Northampton. The nursery employs 22 members of childcare staff. All 22 hold an appropriate early years qualification at level 2, level 3, level 5 or level 6, including one who holds early years professional status. The nursery opens from Monday to Friday, all year round, apart from Christmas and bank holidays. Sessions are from 8am until 6pm. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Karen Siddons

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 quality of education during activities, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact this has on children's learning.
- The inspector completed a joint observation with the deputy manager of the nursery.
- The deputy manager and the inspector completed a learning walk together.
- The inspector held a meeting with the nursery management team. They looked at relevant documentation and evidence of the suitability of staff working in the nursery.
- The inspector spoke with staff and children during the inspection.
- The inspector spoke to parents and read written feedback from parents about the nursery, taking account of their views.

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.

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk

This publication is available at <https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2022