

# Inspection of Acorn Nursery

Ministry of Defence, Mail Centre, Main Building, Horse Guards Avenue, Whitehall,  
LONDON SW1A 2HB

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Inspection date: 15 November 2022

## **Overall effectiveness**

## **Requires improvement**

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The quality of education

**Requires improvement**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Requires improvement**

Personal development

**Requires improvement**

Leadership and management

**Requires improvement**

Overall effectiveness at previous  
inspection

Outstanding

## What is it like to attend this early years setting?

### The provision requires improvement

Children enjoy the time they spend at this well-organised nursery. They are confident and feel safe and secure. Overall, the provision is carefully planned. Activities stimulate children's interests, encouraging them to stay focused and extend their own learning. For example, older children play with a train track and trains in the sand. They support each other to join the pieces on the uneven surface, flattening the sand and then testing to see if the train runs smoothly over the track. However, some pre-school staff do not regularly join in with the children's play; therefore, valuable learning opportunities are missed.

Staff in the baby room have high expectations of the children. Key persons build strong nurturing relationships with the children and know them very well, including what interests them. For example, children who show an interest in animals are provided with a farm. Their key person sits with them, supporting their play. She takes the opportunity to develop their language skills by naming the animals and encouraging the children to do the same.

Sometimes, pre-school children's behaviour is less than good, particularly when they are transitioning between activities. At these times, they become unsettled, and with no clear expectations from staff about how they should behave and what they should do, their emotional security and behaviour suffers.

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

- The manager, although relatively new to the post, has a good understanding of the nursery's strengths and areas for improvement. She has organised training and provided direct professional support for staff to address weaknesses in their teaching practice. She regularly works alongside them, modelling and coaching them to help develop their skills. Unfortunately, this support is not currently having the positive impact she had hoped, and further support is necessary.
- Each child is allocated a key person who knows their personal needs well, such as their stage of toilet training and dietary preferences. Staff gather information from parents when children join the nursery, including key words in their home language.
- Some pre-school staff do not understand the individual learning and development needs of the children they teach, including children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. As a result, they are not able to provide effective targeted support, and children do not make the progress they should.
- Pre-school children are confident and demonstrate very good independence skills when playing on their own or with others. However, staff do not always foster these skills by encouraging children to carry out more activities for themselves. For example, when children are getting ready to go on a visit, staff put on their

coats and shoes for them rather than asking them to have a go.

- Transitions and routine activities, such as snack time in the baby room and some carpet sessions in pre-school, are not well planned. This has a negative impact on children's attention skills and behaviour, as they wait for long periods of time without any clear direction from staff.
- Staff support children's language skills by developing their interest in stories and books. The nursery has well-stocked book areas in each room and a lending library for children to select books to read at home. Children enjoy sharing books with staff and 'reading' on their own.
- Despite the nursery not having a designated outside space, staff make good use of the park directly opposite. Daily visits here provide lots of opportunities for children to practise their large-physical skills. Regular outings around London help develop their understanding of the local surroundings and the world in which they live.
- Children learn about other cultures, traditions and beliefs by celebrating a range of festivals. Important memorial events are also marked. Recently, children learned about Remembrance Day due to its significance to many of the families who attend the nursery.
- The manager and key persons have developed very positive relationships with parents. Parents report how well staff know their children and praise the care and education their children receive. Parents receive daily feedback about their children's experiences at nursery and appreciate the termly progress reviews that help them support their children's learning at home.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There are good recruitment procedures in place to ensure that only suitable staff are employed. Staff are registered with the Disclosure and Barring Service, ensuring regular checks can be made on their suitability. Staff receive regular safeguarding training and have a very good knowledge of the potential risks to children's welfare. They know what to do if they are concerned about a child or if an allegation is made about a colleague. Most staff hold valid paediatric first-aid certificates. They are aware of children's individual medical needs and know how to respond in an emergency. The building's safety and security measures are excellent, ensuring children and staff are kept safe.

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

**To meet the requirements of the early years foundation stage, the provider must:**

	Due date

improve behaviour management in the pre-school room, to ensure all children understand how to behave appropriately and staff consistently reinforce good behaviour, supporting children effectively when they are having difficulties	16/12/2022
ensure all staff in the pre-school room are clear about what each child already knows and can do and use this information to better support the next steps in their learning	16/12/2022
improve training and support for staff in the pre-school room so that they are better able to extend and progress children's learning, particularly when supporting their independent play.	16/12/2022

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

- support staff to consistently help children develop their self-care and independence skills
- review transitions and routine activities, ensuring learning time is maximised and children understand the behaviour that is expected of them.

## Setting details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	EY286501
<b>Local authority</b>	Westminster
<b>Inspection number</b>	10239680
<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>	1 to 4
<b>Total number of places</b>	40
<b>Number of children on roll</b>	38
<b>Name of registered person</b>	Bright Horizons Family Solutions Limited
<b>Registered person unique reference number</b>	RP901358
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 3780 3011
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	14 December 2016

## Information about this early years setting

Acorn Nursery is a workplace setting and is part of the Bright Horizons Family Solutions company. It registered in 2004 and is situated in the London Borough of Westminster. It is open Monday to Friday, from 8am to 6pm, for 51 weeks of the year. The nursery receives funding for the provision of free early education for children aged three and four years. Of the 15 members of staff, two hold qualified teacher status and seven hold childcare qualifications at level 2 or 3.

## Information about this inspection

### Inspector

Paul Church

## Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the setting 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 manager and inspector completed a learning walk together of all areas of the nursery and discussed the early years curriculum.
- The inspector talked to staff at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The inspector observed the quality of education being provided, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact that this was having on children's learning.
- The inspector looked at a sample of relevant documentation, including staff suitability checks, paediatric first-aid certificates and safeguarding training.
- The inspector spoke to parents during the inspection and took 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.

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