

Inspection of Acorn Day Nursery, YMCA, Central Milton Keynes

YMCA, Central Milton Keynes, North Sixth Street, Milton Keynes MK9 2NR

Inspection date: 23 November 2022

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| Overall effectiveness | Good |
| The quality of education | Good |
| Behaviour and attitudes | Good |
| Personal development | Good |
| Leadership and management | Good |
| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | Not applicable |

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

There is a clear and concise intent for the curriculum, which focuses on children learning about nature and their community through first-hand activities. Children enjoy outings that expose them to new experiences, such as travelling by bus to the forest school and visiting the local library. Children develop their literacy skills well and enjoy reading books with staff. Best of all, they love hearing staff tell them stories. Children are enthralled by this and listen open-mouthed absorbing the stories staff tell them about pirates and ships. They eagerly ask questions and want more stories. Children are curious and enthusiastic about their learning at the nursery. They mix ingredients together and explore different materials, such as sand, flowers, water and herbs. This gives children a rich, sensory experience.

Young babies arrive at the nursery and separate from their parents with confidence. They smile broadly at the staff who care for them. Babies are fascinated as they watch older children play. All children are starting to become confident communicators who can express themselves and their ideas. Older children talk imaginatively as they play together. Children behave well. There are clear rules that staff explain. This helps children to understand what is expected of them and helps to create an environment, where children feel safe and secure.

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

- The broad curriculum is accessible for all children and supports their good progress and development. Staff know the children well and plan experiences that build on what they already know and can do. Staff support children to follow their interests and this helps to sustain children's attention.
- Staff are alert to how the COVID-19 period has had a detrimental impact upon some children's communication and language development. All staff ensure they provide an environment that is rich in language. For example staff describe activities, repeat words and ask questions to effectively help children to hear and understand language.
- There is swift intervention in place to identify and support children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Staff put timely action plans in place to help close gaps in children's development. Close observation and assessments help staff to recognise and celebrate the small steps in progress that children make.
- In the squirrel room, children are becoming increasingly independent and are confident to use the skills that they are learning. Staff recognise when they need to take action to support children. For example, they notice when children are having difficulty cutting, and offer left-handed scissors. This helps some children to quickly use them with precision and accuracy, which boosts their confidence.
- All children benefit hugely from exciting opportunities when they play outdoors.

Babies particularly enjoy playing in puddles and experiencing the different weather. Staff are keen to allow babies to free flow to and from the garden. Staff need to prepare for other care routines, as they are putting on and taking off children's outdoor clothing. Once young babies are dry and warm, they quickly want to go back outdoors or crawl on the wet floor and clothing. Therefore, the changing cycle needs to happen again, and this begins to affect staff's good quality interactions with the young children.

- All staff are attentive and caring towards children. As a result, children form close relationships with their key person and show they are content and settled. Staff have warm interactions with children. In the baby room, bottle feeding is unhurried, relaxed and provides time for gentle interaction and eye contact.
- Staff undertake a range of training that extends on their knowledge and skills. However, some staff are not fully confident about putting their training into practice. This is an area that senior managers are evaluating to find ways to ensure that staff and children fully benefit from staff's professional development.
- Relationships with parents are positive. Parents say that they receive extensive information from their child's key person. This helps them to know how well children are progressing and how to support them at home.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The leadership team at the nursery are clear in their responsibilities to train staff so they understand their roles in keeping children safe. They provide further visual information for staff in notices and diagrams on display around the nursery. Therefore, all those working with children can readily recognise and know how to report any concerns about children's welfare appropriately. The leadership team have recently reviewed and updated their policies that guide staff in following local safeguarding children partners' procedures. Staff are vigilant in supervising children and carrying out effective risk assessments to help keep children safe.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- develop the organisation of the routine for babies, so that they gain maximum benefit from their daily activities
- encourage staff to feel more confident in embedding the learning from their professional development to enhance their performance and enrich the curriculum.

Setting details

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| Unique reference number | 2588856 |
| Local authority | Milton Keynes |
| Inspection number | 10262203 |
| 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 | 0 to 4 |
| Total number of places | 48 |
| Number of children on roll | 64 |
| Name of registered person | Acorn Early Years Foundation |
| Registered person unique reference number | RP901362 |
| Telephone number | 07908 892257 |
| Date of previous inspection | Not applicable |

Information about this early years setting

Acorn Day Nursery YMCA registered in 2020. The nursery employs 11 members of childcare staff. Of these, nine hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 2 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. The nursery supports a number of children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Hayley Marshall-Gowen

Inspection activities

- This inspection was prioritised following a risk assessment process.
- This was the first routine inspection the nursery 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 setting.
- The inspector discussed the intent of the curriculum and observed its implementation during activities, both 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, deputy manager and the head of early years. She looked at relevant documentation, such as evidence of the suitability of staff working in the nursery.
- 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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