

Inspection of Acorns Pre-School

Whitstone Community Primary School, Oak Lane, Whitstone, Holsworthy, Devon
EX22 6TH

Inspection date: 13 March 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good
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What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children feel safe and secure in this friendly pre-school. Staff and children develop warm and trusting relationships, and children's well-being is consistently supported. Staff help children to understand and recognise their emotions. Children look in a mirror and talk about their facial expressions and how they feel. They then use this as they play, identifying their friend's disposition and ways to make them feel happy.

Children demonstrate a positive attitude to learning and behave well. They show a willingness to carry out small tasks, such as laying the table with cups at snack time. Children develop strong independence skills as they pour their own drinks and use scissors to open packaging. Children sing a 'please and thank you' song as a reminder to always use their manners. They understand the importance of washing their hands before eating and comment, 'Germs make you sick'. Staff talk to children about the importance of healthy eating, and children understand that their body requires vitamins. Children enjoy exploring a range of different foods, such as in the 'home corner' where they shell peas from their pods and try celery. They know to place any unwanted or leftover food in the compost bin for the 'worms'.

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

- Partnerships with parents are effective. Staff obtain information about children when they join to help cater for their individual needs and interests. They ask parents for termly updates to ensure staff have the most relevant information about children. Staff frequently share details with parents about children's development and ways to support their learning at home. Parents enjoy attending the pre-school's stay-and-play events with their children. They comment on how children have made progress in their development since joining.
- Children enjoy a range of outdoor opportunities. Staff help younger children to make marks in paint and encourage older children to write the initial letters of their name. Children enjoy using their imaginations to create 'magic potions' using flowers and herbs. They confidently cut these up to add to their 'mixture'. Children enjoy throwing and catching balls and relish in taking part in running races with staff. They develop strong physical skills.
- Staff have good links with the on-site school and work collaboratively to ensure a smooth transition when children move on. Staff help older children to develop essential skills prior to joining school, such as developing their independence, communication and using one-handed tools and equipment. Staff also work with external agencies should children require additional support to help close gaps in their learning.

- All children enjoy stories and songs. During audio stories, children move like the animals in the story and sing along. Children ask questions about different font sizes and show an awareness of letter sounds. They can recognise their name when shown and confidently self-register. However, staff do not consistently plan and implement adult-led activities effectively to capture all children's interests and build on their existing skills. Some children lose concentration, and others find the activities too easy.
- Children enjoy free-play activities based on their home experiences, such as farming and agriculture. Staff help them to plant beans and ask children what the beans will require to grow. Staff extend this learning by reading the story 'Jasper's Beanstalk' to the children. Children recall their prior knowledge and guess what will happen next.
- Staff help children to develop an understanding of the local community. They take children to the nearby residential home, where the children give a posy of flowers to each resident. Children share stories, sing songs and share their experiences with their elderly neighbours.
- Children enjoy adding resources to existing activities. For example, they find bells and shells to use in their play dough. Staff quickly adapt this activity and link it to the nursery rhyme 'Mary, Mary Quite Contrary'. Children know and join in with the song well, supporting their language skills.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff and students understand their role in protecting children from harm and know who to report their concerns to. The manager provides students with a lanyard containing relevant child protection information so they can access this information quickly and act upon it should they feel a child is at risk of harm. All individuals working with children, including committee members, attend regular safeguarding training to keep their knowledge up to date. Staff help children to recognise potential risks in the environment, such as asking children to pick up scissors if dropped on the floor.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- review the planning and implementation of adult-led activities to ensure they capture children's interests and build on their existing knowledge.

Setting details

Unique reference number	102993
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	10264611
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	16
Number of children on roll	15
Name of registered person	Acorns Playgroup Committee
Registered person unique reference number	RP520036
Telephone number	01288341540
Date of previous inspection	21 June 2017

Information about this early years setting

Acorns Pre-School registered in 2010. It operates from a separate, purpose-built building in the grounds of Whitstone Primary School, near Holsworthy, Devon. The pre-school is open on Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays, from 8.45am until 3.15pm, and on Tuesdays from 8.45am to 11.45am, during term time only. It receives funding to provide free early education for children aged two, three and four years. The pre-school employs four members of staff, all of whom have childcare qualifications between level 3 and 5. The pre-school also has a student, who is studying for a level 3 qualification in childcare.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Joanne Steward

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the pre-school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the manager and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the provider.
- Parents shared their views of the pre-school with the inspector.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation of a group activity with the manager.
- The manager and the inspector completed a learning walk together of all areas of the pre-school and discussed the early years curriculum.
- Children spoke to the inspector about what they like to do at the pre-school.
- The inspector observed the quality of education and assessed the impact that this was having on children's learning.
- The manager provided the inspector with a sample of key documentation on request.

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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