

Inspection of Acorn Under Fives

C/O Oaklands Infant School, Butler Road, CROWTHORNE, Berkshire RG45 6QZ

Inspection date: 11 May 2023

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

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is outstanding

Children are exceptionally well settled in this highly inclusive and welcoming pre-school. Staff expertly plan an extremely well-thought-out and flexible curriculum. All staff have an excellent understanding of the intentions of the curriculum, so their teaching is highly effective in continually building on what children know and can do.

Children rapidly gain important skills for life through a wide range of exciting and challenging activities. They learn how to use scissors, sewing machines and a large variety of tools safely and skilfully. For example, children develop their creative skills as they use the sewing machine under close supervision of staff. They make resources, such as bunting, doll's clothes and cushion covers for their role-play activities. Meanwhile, others learn to use saws, hammers and nails safely in the woodwork area. Highly engaging staff support children to have a go and to complete their creations. When they succeed, they beam with utter pride. Staff consistently praise children for being persistent in their approach to learning.

Staff are passionate about their work and make the children their priority. They are excellent role models and teach children to be kind and respectful to others and the environment. As a result, children show exceptionally high levels of respect for those around them. For example, staff have created a kindness tree. They reward children for their good deeds and celebrate these with a leaf on the kindness tree. This helps children to feel proud of their achievements and gives them a strong sense of belonging and self-esteem.

All children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who receive additional funding, make excellent progress in their learning and development.

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

- Staff have implemented highly impressive and consistent routines. For example, before lunchtime, all children participate enthusiastically in daily dancing sessions. Staff and children jump, sing and balance together with utter delight. Children show tremendous levels of excitement and cooperation as they practise their physical skills. This supports their small- and large-muscle development successfully.
- Staff plan an abundance of educational learning opportunities for the children, which they know they will thoroughly enjoy. Consequently, children have impressive attitudes to their learning. For example, children are deeply engrossed when creating potions at the 'potion station'. They mix flowers and herbs they have grown in the pre-school garden. Some add colours, such as red

and blue, to the mix, to see what the outcome will be. Children's faces light up as the mixture turns purple and matches the flowers.

- Staff skilfully support children's early language. For example, they suggest children identify a flower with the help of a flower encyclopaedia. Children describe the flower with words such as 'spikey', and staff praise them as they identify the plant as a 'corn flower'. Through these informative interactions, children's vocabulary is extended beautifully. This also supports their developing understanding of the natural world exceptionally well.
- Staff plan a vast amount of highly stimulating activities and provide excellent resources for the children to ignite their imagination and creativity. Children play with utter contentment with their friends in the inviting home corner area, modelling exceptional behaviour. For example, they dress up in glamorous costumes and pretend to have phone conversations with their friends. They are highly engaged as they chat to each other and immerse themselves in different characters. This supports their creative and developing social skills superbly.
- Children develop an exceptional understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe in the setting. For example, staff have created a health and safety checklist for them. Children enthusiastically check each area of the setting and tick it off their list. If they identify any risks, they tell their friends to be mindful and share their knowledge with them. This solidifies their understanding of the rules and safety procedures in the setting. Furthermore, children feel immense pride, as their input is highly praised by staff. This supports their personal development and overall well-being highly effectively.
- Partnerships with parents and other settings are exemplary. Parents know what their children are learning and how they can support their rapid progress at home. Information is shared daily via an app and linked to other providers that the children also attend. This provides excellent and consistent continuity of care.
- Staff speak highly of the manager and feel incredibly well supported. This is evident in the low staff turnover at the setting. The manager leads the pre-school with a strong sense of direction and motivates staff to continually improve their knowledge and skills. Leaders monitor, review and improve the ongoing quality of the provision. Their excellent oversight of the pre-school has ensured that the standards continually rise and the setting provides children with superb care and education.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Robust systems are in place for safeguarding children. Every member of staff takes responsibility and is swift to act on any concerns about children's welfare. Close partnerships with the local safeguarding partners are in place. Staff have regular safeguarding training to ensure that they know how to refer any concerns about children's safety. Leaders put in-depth recruitment and induction arrangements into place to ensure that staff are suitable for their roles. There are thorough risk assessments in place, and staff are vigilant in supervising children and maintaining

the safety and security of the nursery. Staff practise termly fire drill procedures with the children to enable the safety of all individuals on the premises.

Setting details

Unique reference number	148637
Local authority	Wokingham
Inspection number	10280693
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Day care type	Sessional day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	2 to 5
Total number of places	33
Number of children on roll	53
Name of registered person	Acorn Under Fives Committee
Registered person unique reference number	RP902183
Telephone number	01344 752 752
Date of previous inspection	12 September 2017

Information about this early years setting

Acorn Under Fives registered in 1986. It is managed by a committee of trustees. The pre-school operates from the same site as Oaklands Infant School, in Crowthorne, Berkshire. It is open each weekday, during term time, from 9am to 3.30pm. The pre-school is in receipt of funding for the provision of free early education to children aged two, three and four years. There are 13 staff working with the children, 11 of whom hold appropriate childcare qualifications.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Katharina Hill

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 manager and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the setting.
- The inspector observed the quality of teaching during activities, 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. She looked at relevant documentation, such as evidence of the suitability of staff working in the pre-school.
- 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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