

Inspection of Acorn Community Nursery

Kingshead Close, Castlefields, Runcorn, Cheshire WA7 2JE

Inspection date: 17 May 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 arrive happy and leave their parents with confidence. Children settle quickly and are eager to start their day. They display good manners, and behaviour is good. Staff are nurturing and provide children with plenty of comfort and reassurance, which helps them to feel safe and secure around new visitors. Staff skilfully provide opportunities for children to talk about their feelings. For example, children recall reading 'The Colour Monster', and they comment on how they are feeling through colours, such as 'blue' for 'sad'. Staff know the children very well, which is reflected in the strong attachments children have with staff. This supports children's emotional well-being.

Staff develop a challenging and sequenced curriculum, which is based around children's unique interests and development. They plan a wide range of activities based on themes, and they build on what children already know and can do. Staff support all children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), to be confident learners. They provide plenty of encouragement and praise during their play. Babies excitedly explore carefully placed objects to help develop their core strength and to sit up independently. Older children confidently recall how to stay safe while riding the rocking horse. Therefore, children of all ages make good progress.

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

- Leaders work together to ensure that they have a clear vision for the nursery and have high expectations for all children to make the best possible progress. She is reflective and has helped staff to access targeted training opportunities to improve their teaching. She carries out regular observations and has an accurate overview of staff training. This has a positive impact on outcomes for children.
- Leaders recognise that the development of children's communication and language skills is a current priority. For example, there is a strong emphasis on reading with children. Younger children enjoy looking for pictures of farm animals while staff model the sounds they make. Furthermore, staff model good language to children through narration and introduce new vocabulary, such as 'delicious' and 'shiny'. This helps to address any emerging gaps in children's communication and language skills and supports children to become confident communicators.
- Physical play is promoted well. Older children are developing their awareness of safety, as they independently climb, slide, and practise their balancing. Furthermore, babies enjoy pulling themselves up on the outdoor sandpit, with staff supervision. Children develop good physical skills.
- Staff interact well with children, and they generally use good teaching skills to ensure that what they intend the children to learn is achieved. However,

occasionally, staff do not recognise children's emerging interests and creativity during activities. For example, older children enjoy making shapes, such as squares and circles, with their bodies. Children excitedly ask how to make other shapes, like a hexagon, yet staff do not explore this. As a result, some children lose interest.

- There is good support for children with SEND. Staff identify when children require extra support. They make ongoing assessments and work with parents to provide pertinent information for other professionals. This helps to ensure early intervention and helps to close gaps in learning.
- Healthy lifestyles are promoted. Younger children are supported in carrying out good hygiene procedures, such as washing their own hands before eating food. Older children are aware of good oral health and the importance of drinking milk to have healthy teeth. Children have a good understanding of the importance of healthy lifestyles.
- Younger children are encouraged to serve themselves food, pour drinks and take their empty plates to the sink when they have finished. Moreover, older children carry out personal care needs, such as going to the toilet independently. All children are encouraged to be independent, and they help to support children in readiness for school.
- Partnerships with parents are good. Parents say that staff go above and beyond to ensure their child is progressing. Parents receive lots of information and advice from staff. For example, they receive information about potty training and 'ditch the dummy' techniques to help with their child's development at home. This provides a coherent continuity in children's learning and development.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and staff have sound knowledge and understanding of keeping children safe from harm. Safeguarding policies are in place, and staff know the reporting procedures if they have concerns about a child's welfare or if an allegation is made against a colleague. They confidently discuss signs and symptoms of abuse and have good awareness of county lines and radicalisation. Children are confidently developing awareness on how to stay safe during riskier play, such as using the climbing frame. Ongoing risk assessments are carried out to ensure that the nursery is safe and secure.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- support staff to consistently recognise children's emerging interests during group sessions.

Setting details

Unique reference number	303430
Local authority	Halton
Inspection number	10285991
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	70
Number of children on roll	88
Name of registered person	Astmoor Community Project
Registered person unique reference number	RP911367
Telephone number	01928 576 369
Date of previous inspection	27 October 2017

Information about this early years setting

Acorn Community Nursery registered in 2000. The nursery employs 16 members of childcare staff, of whom one staff member is unqualified, and 15 hold appropriate early years qualifications. The nursery opens from Monday to Friday, for 51 weeks each year, excluding bank holidays. Sessions are from 7.30am until 6pm, including out-of-school provision. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector
Kelly Little

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 setting.
- The deputy manager and inspector completed a tour of the setting together and discussed the curriculum provided.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation on the quality of teaching with the nursery manager.
- The inspector observed staff interactions with the children during activities and at mealtimes.
- The inspector spoke to staff at appropriate times during the inspection.
- The inspector spoke to parents on arrival and took into account their views.
- The inspector held a meeting with leaders to discuss leadership and management arrangements.
- The inspector viewed relevant documentation and evidence of the suitability of staff working at the setting.

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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