

Inspection of Acorn Nursery

The Rise, Portslade, Brighton, East Sussex BN41 2PY

Inspection date: 18 December 2023

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

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is outstanding

Children blossom and thrive at this exemplary nursery. Passionate staff individually greet children as they arrive. Staff thoughtfully plan an array of rich experiences, which they skilfully intertwine with children's individual curiosities and fascinations. As such, children quickly immerse themselves in play, confidently seeking out friends to share experiences with. Staff recognise the importance of children's communication skills. Interactions all children receive from staff are plentiful and of exceptionally high quality. Children delight in their own communication in a variety of ways. Babies bounce rhythmically in enjoyment as they join in with familiar songs. Older children delight in their own back-and-forth conversations, sharing their ideas and thoughts. The highly skilled staff recognise the importance of these moments and take time to extend and build on each child's experiences.

Staff are dedicated to delivering tailored care and learning, recognising the uniqueness of every child. Staff are highly responsive to children's needs, considering their personalities, life experiences and home routines. They interact with children sensitively, nurturing children's self-esteem. As a result, children demonstrate they feel safe and secure, flourishing in self-confidence, determination, and resilience.

Staff have consistently high expectations of children's behaviour. They are fantastic role models to children. For instance, they continually promote turn taking and being kind. In addition, staff actively strive to teach children the importance of being inclusive. As a result, children play harmoniously together. They show exceptional kindness to each other and a positive understanding of their own and other's differences. For example, children independently recognise when friends, some who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), need support or some extra time to learn something new.

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

- The dedicated management team create a highly effective and ambitious curriculum. This is faultlessly communicated with staff who deliver sequenced learning with expertise. As a result of the rich experiences on offer to children, their attitudes to learning are consistently positive. They are highly motivated and sustain concentration for extended periods of time. Staff provide appropriate challenge for children, who in response demonstrate perseverance to achieve new skills. This prepares them for future success and ensures all children make excellent progress in their learning.
- Families and their uniqueness are at the heart of this nursery. Staff go above and beyond to provide tailored support, guidance and advice to parents and carers. They recognise and value the fundamental role they play in families' lives

and the impact this has on children. Parents share that their children make 'phenomenal progress', particularly in their language development. They highly value the support they receive. They comment that 'staff are like superheroes, always there when you need them'.

- Children with SEND receive superb support. With the support of the special educational needs coordinators, staff are particularly effective at identifying and supporting children with SEND. They expertly use their knowledge of each child to put personalised strategies in place. This ensures children get the specific support they need. In addition, staff work in collaboration with a wide range of other professionals. Children with SEND, as well as those from families in challenging situations, blossom and succeed alongside their friends.
- Management place an exceptional focus on staff's well-being, ensuring they are supported, mentored and feel valued. Staff have plentiful opportunities to pursue their passion in early years. They benefit from tailored training and visits to other settings which ignite their enthusiasm for the work they do. They cascade new knowledge to other staff members. They continuously strive to provide the best opportunities for children. In turn, this enables the children who attend to make the greatest possible start in life.
- Communication and language are promoted exceptionally well. Staff model back-and-forth communication with babies, listening to their babbles and responding with spoken words. Babies use simple signs to communicate their needs and wants. They attempt to pronounce new words they hear, such as 'cucumber'. Young children hear new words throughout their explorations, such as 'balance' 'heavier' and 'lighter'. Children confidently engage in conversations during all aspects of their play. Those whose spoken language has not yet developed, are supported with visual prompts to ensure their needs and wants are heard. These strong foundations in communication and language ensure children are confident communicators.
- Mealtimes are seen as teachable moments for children of all ages. Staff promote children's independence. For instance, children choose their own fruit and pour their own drinks. Children have opportunities to safely observe and feel foods in their whole or raw form. For example, babies hold and explore whole apples and oranges as they tuck into their prepared snack. Older children observe and feel real grains of rice as they eat cooked rice during lunch. This sparks children's curiosity about where food comes from and the differences in food's various forms. These thought-provoking opportunities help children experience awe and wonder as they investigate the world around them.
- Children have an abundance of opportunities to develop their physical skills. Staff support babies to crawl, pull themselves up and practise early climbing skills on physical play equipment. Babies giggle excitedly and squeal in delight as they achieve those early steps. Older children delight in climbing, negotiating space and sliding. Children have opportunities to develop their small muscle skills. Babies make large marks with chinks. Older children explore play dough, rolling and squeezing it into various shapes, as well as writing their own early 'letters'. These activities support children's hand-eye coordination and prepare children to develop early writing skills.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

All staff have a clear understanding of their safeguarding responsibilities. Staff demonstrate a secure understanding of what to do if they have a concern about a child's welfare, including how to report to the local safeguarding partnership. Staff are aware of the procedure to take in the event they are concerned about a colleague's behaviour. The management team have effective procedures in place to monitor staff's knowledge of safeguarding and provide regular training updates. They have robust recruitment and vetting processes in place, ensuring the suitability of staff who have access to children and their families. Children are well supervised, including at mealtimes. Effective risk assessments are in place, including procedures for children with allergies and additional medical needs. This helps to ensure children's safety.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY318095
Local authority	Brighton and Hove
Inspection number	10320485
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	0 to 4
Total number of places	60
Number of children on roll	72
Name of registered person	Brighton & Hove City Council
Registered person unique reference number	RP526925
Telephone number	01273 293980
Date of previous inspection	16 May 2018

Information about this early years setting

Acorn Nursery registered in 2006 and is part of the local authority Family Hub in Portslade, East Sussex. The nursery is open each weekday from 8am to 6pm, for 51 weeks of the year. The nursery employs 23 members of staff, 18 of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications at Level 3 or above, including a member of staff who holds qualified teacher status. The nursery is in receipt of funding to provide early education to children aged two, three and four years.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Natalie Moir

Inspection activities

- 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 provider.
- The management team 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 deputy manager carried out a joint observation of a planned activity with the inspector.
- The special educational needs coordinator's spoke to the inspector about how they support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The inspector observed the quality of education being provided, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact that this was having on children's learning.
- Parents shared their views of the provision with the inspector.

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.

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk

This publication is available at <https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2023