

Inspection of Acres of Fun Limited

Acres of Fun Day Nursery, Priors Court Road, Hermitage, Thatcham, Berkshire
RG18 9SG

Inspection date: 14 February 2024

| 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 | Requires improvement |

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is outstanding

Children are extremely happy, secure and have consistently positive attitudes to their play and learning. Staff have high aspirations for children's development and provide an environment that helps children to flourish and thrive. They put children's needs at the heart of everything that they do and guide children through exciting learning experiences that enhance their current skills. Staff are extremely passionate, caring and very enthusiastic. They get to know all children very well. As a result, children form strong attachments with staff.

The quality of teaching is exemplary across the whole staff team. Children of all ages demonstrate high levels of engagement and interest. Staff enhance children's communication skills incredibly well across the nursery. Staff encourage a love of books, words and literature to ignite children's early vocabulary, creativeness and imaginations. Children consistently and confidently show what they already know, remember and can do. Staff successfully plan targeted intentions, such as strategies to support children's early communication, speech and language. All children, including those in need of additional support, make excellent progress. Children successfully gain the skills they need to give them the best foundations for their future learning.

Staff place a great emphasis on promoting children's self-confidence and emotional well-being. Older children begin to understand and recognise feelings and emotions. This is because staff support children to learn how to regulate these emotions with colours and a familiar story about the 'colour monster'. Children's behaviour is exemplary. Children are eager to join in play and are kind to their friends. Staff are skilled in gaining children's attention and maintaining it. For example, during a small-group time, staff use expressive gestures, facial expressions, and props when reading stories to babies. This captivates babies, who show excitement and curiosity.

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

- Leaders and staff have made excellent improvements to raise the quality of education. Leaders are inspirational and have implemented an ambitious curriculum that identifies clear intentions for learning throughout the nursery. Staff successfully and skilfully sequence children's learning to build on what they know and can do.
- Staff expertly provide a curriculum that is centred on engaging children in exploration and discovery. Children benefit from a wealth of outdoor experiences and covered outdoor play areas, which are used all year round, to enhance learning, resilience and curiosity. This provides children with an essential opportunity to explore the natural world, and it builds on their communication

and encourages risk taking within a safe environment, as well as promoting high-quality opportunities for adventures and physical activities.

- Staff are highly successful at giving children experiences that promote an understanding of people and communities. Children grow vegetables in the garden to eat. They learn about the importance of healthy eating and where food comes from. Staff provide opportunities for children to meet professionals from different occupations. For example, children learn about people who can help them and meet the fire brigade, teachers and doctors.
- Staff place an exceptional focus on promoting children's mathematical skills. Children develop an excellent knowledge of numbers. As such, they can count reliably, match quantities and use some early addition and division in their daily routines. For instance, at lunchtime, pre-school children problem solve how many plates, cups and cutlery they will need for their friends sitting at their table. Staff teach them to divide the numbers of mirrors between each table, which supports children to learn how to use mathematics purposefully. Children develop highly effective skills in readiness for school.
- The nursery's special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) is highly experienced in her role. She is extremely knowledgeable about the children who attend that require additional support. The SENCo works closely with each child's key person, family and relevant agencies to ensure that they receive timely interventions and targeted support to meet their developmental needs. Children on the pathway to diagnosis are supported extremely well.
- Partnerships with parents are an exceptionally strong feature of this nursery. Leaders and staff work very closely with parents and professionals to enable children to have the best experiences. There are many opportunities for parents to be part of their child's education. For example, parents are invited into special events. They have opportunities to share stories at home, through the book lending library, and children's home experiences are reflected in the curriculum. Parents report that communication sharing and support are excellent. They feel part of their child's learning.
- Leaders continually reflect on the provision they provide and how they can enhance it. For instance, leaders recognise the importance of weaving mathematics into the curriculum and are keen to continue promoting this training to all staff through their 'Maths Champions'. Staff receive consistent support and training, and their own professional development and personal well-being are given high priority. Staff carry out regular peer observations to improve the quality of education. As a team, staff evaluate, share ideas and are passionate about the role they play.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts children's interests first.

Setting details

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| Unique reference number | EY264744 |
| Local authority | West Berkshire |
| Inspection number | 10287762 |
| 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 | 120 |
| Number of children on roll | 141 |
| Name of registered person | Acres of Fun Limited |
| Registered person unique reference number | RP521505 |
| Telephone number | 01635 203300 |
| Date of previous inspection | 22 March 2023 |

Information about this early years setting

Acres of Fun Limited registered in 2003. It is in the rural village of Hermitage, near Newbury, West Berkshire. The nursery opens each weekday, all year round, except bank holidays and a week at the end of August. It opens from 8am until 6pm. It also offers out-of-school care during holidays. The nursery employs 43 staff to work with the children, 37 of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 2, 3 or above. This includes two members of staff who hold early years professional status and an early years degree. The nursery receives funding for the provision of early education for three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors

Anneliese Fox-Jones
Tara Naylor

Inspection activities

- The inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the provider and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the provider.
- The inspectors observed activities in the six main base rooms and garden. They talked to staff about the progress individual children are making and what they want the children to learn.
- Leaders and the inspectors completed a learning walk across all areas of the nursery to understand how the early years provision and the curriculum are organised.
- Two joint observations were carried out by the inspectors and leaders. The inspectors observed interactions between staff and the children and evaluated the impact these have on children's learning.
- The inspectors checked evidence of the suitability and qualifications of staff working with children.
- The inspectors gathered parents' feedback through written comments. Inspectors also spoke to parents and children during the inspection and took account of their views.

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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