Inspection of Acorn Family Centre

Askham Grange Prison, Main Street, Askham Richard, YORK YO23 3FT

Inspection date:	17 September 2024

Overall effectiveness	**Good**
The quality of education	**Good**
Behaviour and attitudes	**Good**
Personal development	**Good**
Leadership and management	**Good**
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not applicable

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children are happy and settled at this friendly nursery. They are greeted by warm and caring staff. Activities that children enjoy are provided, which helps children to settle quickly. For example, children enjoy listening to stories and staff sing songs. Children's behaviour is good. Staff kindly remind children to say 'please' and 'thank you'. This helps children to learn good manners from a young age.

Young children enthusiastically explore stimulating activities. For instance, staff prepare a tray with animals and interesting materials. Children eagerly stomp the animals through crackers and cereals, listening to the crunching sounds. Staff help to expand children's language skills as they do this. For example, staff repeat words such as 'crunch'. Children are inquisitive to feel a selection of textures and smell the scents of herb plants. They learn to use their senses to understand and explore their activities and environment.

Children demonstrate confidence when practising their physical skills. For example, they competently play on the ride-on toys. Staff teach children to do things for themselves whenever possible. For example, they help young children to wash their hands for snack and teach children to put their own coats on for outdoor play. Staff help to prepare children well for future transitions.

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

- Clear procedures are in place for the safe recruitment and vetting of staff. Staff are well qualified in their roles. They have individual discussions with the manager and attend regular team meetings. This helps to develop staff's effectiveness in working with children and helps to improve their teaching skills. Management ensure that they are always available to listen to staff. Staff well-being is of extreme importance.
- The management team is committed to continuous improvement. It reviews the quality of the provision and accurately identify priorities for development. For example, staff have reflected on snack times in the nursery and have provided a more homely environment. This helps children to feel more settled.
- Staff update their knowledge in a range of areas. For example, staff have developed their understanding of children's emotional health and well-being. They identify training that they feel will have a positive impact on the families who attend. There are plans in place to further develop staff's understanding of the way children learn.
- Staff observe and assess children's development effectively. They use children's next steps in development to plan activities to engage children. For example, staff plan music sessions from external agencies, which help to develop children's language and creativity skills. Children enjoy listening to songs and

smile at the monkey and crocodile puppets. On some occasions, learning intentions when children choose to access the outdoor area are less focused on strengthening children's learning. Nonetheless, children are highly curious and enthusiastic learners overall.

- On entry, staff ask parents for a range of information about their children. This helps them to find out about individual needs and uniqueness. For example, staff gather key words for children who speak English as an additional language. Staff use a range of information to plan to meet children's individual needs from the outset.
- Parents comment that their children enjoy attending and staff know them well. They feel that staff provide a welcoming environment. Staff have recently introduced groups for the parents to attend. for example a cooking club. This helps to involve parents in their children's care and learning in the nursery.
- Children's understanding of healthy lifestyles is supported well overall. For example, they are offered healthy fresh food and access daily fresh air. Children enjoy occasional trips to supermarkets, parks and other open spaces. However, methods used to increase children's knowledge of the importance of good oral health and the care of their teeth are not yet embedded to fully support children's learning.
- Children benefit from playing with a wide range of high-quality, well-organised resources which are easily accessible to them. Staff provide children with opportunities to extend their literacy skills. For example, they encourage children to make marks on paper.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- plan and implement the curriculum more effectively, particularly when children choose to learn outdoors
- strengthen opportunities offered to help to develop children's understanding of the importance of oral health.

Setting details

Unique reference number	2686238
Local authority	York
Inspection number	10354731
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	0 to 1
Total number of places	11
Number of children on roll	3
Name of registered person	Action For Children Developments Ltd
Registered person unique reference number	RP539433
Telephone number	01904772078
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

The Acorn Centre registered in 2022 and is located in York. The nursery employs eight members of childcare staff. Of these, seven hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 or above, including one with level 6. The nursery opens from Monday to Friday all year round. They close a few days over the Christmas period. Sessions are from 8am until 5pm.

Information about this inspection

Inspector
Kerry Holder

Inspection activities

- The inspector held discussions with the management team and staff about the design of the curriculum and how it is being implemented.
- The inspector observed staff practice and their engagement with children throughout the inspection. She spoke with staff and children during the inspection.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation with a member of the management team to assess the impact of staff's teaching on children's learning.
- The inspector spoke to parents during the inspection and took account of their verbal views.
- The inspector viewed all areas of the premises used by the children.
- The inspector checked evidence of suitability and qualifications of staff working with children.

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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