

Inspection of Acorn Day Nursery Shenley

Shenley Road, Milton Keynes MK5 6AB

Inspection date: 18 February 2025

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

Leaders and staff know that for children to be ready to learn well, they first need to feel happy and safe. Leader therefore put in place a highly successful programme of 'settling-in' arrangements before children start to attend nursery. Where possible, they offer home visits to get to know children and their families. Children visit the nursery several times before they start, to help them get to know key staff and to become familiar with routines. This attention to detail successfully ensures that children settle quickly and show they feel very much 'at home' soon after starting. Staff use daily routines well to encourage good manner and kind behaviour.

Leaders plan a programme of learning experiences that ignite children's interest. Staff deliver them with enthusiasm, helping children enjoy their learning. The curriculum of learning for children's language development is especially effective. Staff understand how important this aspect of learning is to children's overall progress. Over time, staff build children's vocabulary and understanding. Staff help babies make the transition for babbling to using recognisable words. Staff enter into thoughtful conversations with children, often using children's self-chosen play as a starting point for conversations. Staff accurately identify children who may need extra help to achieve to their best, and put in place targeted support to help close gaps in learning.

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

- Leaders are very committed to providing high quality care and education. They lead their team well, supporting staff to gain new qualifications and further their teaching skills. They ensure staff feel valued and appreciated. This creates a very positive and happy environment, in which children thrive and develop positive attitudes to learning.
- Staff provide children with a wide range of experiences that help them learn to look after, and appreciate, the natural world. Throughout the nursery staff organise lots of initiatives to help children learn about sustainability and environmental responsibility. Children delight in checking in on the worms who are creating valuable fertiliser for the nursery garden.
- Staff read to babies and children regularly, in ways that promote a love of books. Children enjoy snuggling in for stories. Staff encourage them well to listen stories to the end and to talk about what they hear and see.
- Staff use numbers and some mathematical concepts during daily routines and when joining in with children's self-chosen play. However, the curriculum for mathematics is not planned and delivered in ways that ensures teaching in this area of learning consistently takes account of what children already know, and builds further on their existing mathematical knowledge.

- Babies receive the cuddles, soothing words, warm smiles and interactions they need to adapt very well to nursery life. Staff understand the value of following routines from home. Babies show real delight in the company of the kind and caring staff. High levels of emotional well-being continue to be evident in older children too.
- Right from the start children are taught the skills they need to become increasingly independent. Staff teach babies how to blow their noses and the importance of disposing of tissues and washing hands afterwards. Children learn to feed themselves and to serve their own food. Younger children confidently put on their boots and coats, able to do so because staff have taught them how to.
- Children gain a positive view of following an active lifestyle. Staff enable children to spend lots of time learning outdoors. Staff are extremely good role models. Children learn from their example that being outdoors in the fresh air is a lot of fun. Staff ensure children have plenty of space and opportunities for energetic play, knowing the importance of this to children's good health.
- Staff plan a rich programme of experiences that ensures children understand what makes them unique and to help children feel involved in their local community. Babies love looking at photos of their families with staff. Older children enjoy many trips out in the local community. They are taken swimming, visit libraries and donate toys to charity shops.
- Partnership working is a real strength of the nursery. Parents are full of praise for staff. They appreciate the regular updates on their children's progress, which helps them continue with this learning at home. Staff who support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities form very effective working partnerships with other professionals to meet children's needs.

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:

- develop further the planning and delivery of the curriculum for mathematical development.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY542266
Local authority	Milton Keynes
Inspection number	10372680
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 4
Total number of places	48
Number of children on roll	69
Name of registered person	Acorn Early Years Foundation
Registered person unique reference number	RP901362
Telephone number	01908 507282
Date of previous inspection	30 April 2019

Information about this early years setting

Acorn Day Nursery Shenley re-registered in 2016 and is situated in Milton Keynes. The nursery is open from 7.30am to 6.15pm, Monday to Friday, throughout the year. The provider employs 15 members of staff. Of these, 11 hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 2 or above. The provide offer offers funded early education for children aged nine months and above.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Sarah Holley

Inspection activities

- The inspector and the manager completed a learning walk together and discussed the early years curriculum.
- The manager and the inspector carried out a joint observation.
- The inspector held meetings with the manager to find out about the leadership and management of the setting.
- Parents shared their views and the inspector took these into account.
- The inspector looked at a sample of key documentation.

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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