

Inspection of Acorn Pre-School

Holy Rood Church, Gosport Road, Stubbington, Fareham PO14 2AS

Inspection date: 4 December 2023

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 arrive and separate easily from their parents as staff warmly welcome them. Children are keen to learn as they confidently select the resources they would like to play with, such as paints.

Staff encourage children to be creative, develop their ideas and solve problems. For instance, children work out how to create their own 'bug hotel'. Staff support children as they debate what the insects might need, such as a door. Children excitedly place their creations out in the garden ready for their new inhabitants.

Staff help children to develop a love of songs and rhymes. Staff sing frequently and children eagerly join in with their favourites, such as 'The Farmer's in His Den'. Children develop their literacy skills through reading stories regularly with staff. Staff skilfully incorporate mathematics into children's play. For example, children learn about the concepts of 'bigger' and 'smaller' as they pretend to be bakers.

Overall, children behave well and have a good understanding of the high expectations for their behaviour. Children begin to learn how to meet their personal hygiene needs. For example, they learn how to blow their nose and sanitise their hands afterwards.

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

- Staff know the children well and have a good understanding of their stages of development. Staff use assessment effectively to know what children are developmentally ready for. For example, older children take part in group times which involve longer periods of sitting and listening to stories, whereas younger children have a more active group time. This means that children are able to meet the expectations for their behaviour because the provision is tailored specifically to them.
- The manager has developed a curriculum that builds on what children know and can do. There are high expectations for children's learning and development, and the curriculum has a strong focus on children's personal, social and emotional development.
- The manager uses supervision to effectively support staff's well-being. This is reflected by staff, who comment that the provision 'feels like a community'. However, the manager does not fully use supervision sessions to identify the minor inconsistencies in teaching practice. This means that they are not able to address these and develop staff's teaching practice with precision.
- Staff are keen to support children with the development of their language skills. However, they are not fully consistent in their approach. For example, not all children are given the time they need to process questions asked and respond.

This means that children's emerging language skills are not fully supported.

- Children have the opportunity to develop their physical skills as staff plan and offer a wide range of activities that encourage them to be active. For example, children strengthen their large-muscle skills as they learn how to navigate balancing logs in the garden. They have the opportunity to develop the small-muscle skills they need for mark making as they use play dough to make 'gingerbread men'. They carefully manipulate pennies to create different features, such as eyes, on their creations. This helps children to make good progress in their physical development.
- Staff act as advocates for children to ensure that they receive the support they need from other professionals, such as speech and language therapy. Additional funding is used appropriately to meet the needs of the children. For example, funding is used to purchase a range of books to capture their interest and support their learning. This means that children, including children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, receive the support they need to make good progress in their learning and development.
- There are effective partnerships between parents and staff. Parents speak highly of the staff and how supportive they are. Staff work hard to ensure that they share ideas with parents to enable them to further support children's learning and development at home.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff show a good understanding of the signs and symptoms that may indicate a child is at risk of harm. They know how to refer their concerns to the designated safeguarding leads at the pre-school and how to escalate concerns to the relevant local safeguarding partners as needed. Staff know how to report an allegation against a member of staff if necessary and feel confident in using the local safeguarding partnership processes. Staff ensure that they keep their safeguarding knowledge up to date through regular training. The manager has a good understanding of the importance of ensuring staff suitability at the recruitment stage and then on an ongoing basis.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- build on the supervision of staff arrangements and ensure that they receive relevant support, coaching and training to make them fully effective in their role
- develop further staff's understanding of how to support the development of children's emerging language skills.

Setting details

Unique reference number	2757580
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	10314805
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register
Day care type	Sessional day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	2 to 4
Total number of places	40
Number of children on roll	34
Name of registered person	Smith, Jayne
Registered person unique reference number	2757579
Telephone number	07340317149
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

Acorn Pre-School re-registered in 2023. The provider employs eight members of childcare staff. Of these, six hold early years qualifications at level 3 or above. The pre-school is open from Monday to Friday, term time only. Sessions are from 9am to 3.30pm, except on Wednesday, when sessions are from midday to 3.30pm. The pre-school provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Natasha Jarvis

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the pre-school 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 pre-school.
- The manager explained the curriculum intentions to the inspector during the learning walk.
- The inspector took part in discussions with staff during the inspection.
- The manager and the inspector observed and evaluated an activity together.
- The inspector sampled relevant documents and reviewed evidence of the suitability of staff.
- Parents shared their views with the inspector.
- The inspector observed staff and children throughout the day.

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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