

Inspection of Acorn at Kents Hill

Wadhurst Lane, Kents Hill, MILTON KEYNES MK7 6JF

Inspection date: 30 September 2019

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

All staff share consistently high expectations for children's learning. They provide a highly stimulating environment which helps them to deliver their intended curriculum exceptionally well. For example, staff organise an extensive range of high-quality natural resources, indoors and outdoors. These help children to be curious, investigate, solve problems and develop a sense of awe and wonder about the world.

Staff ensure that the environment is inviting and safe, and they encourage children to make free choices about where they learn and play. Children choose to spend lots of time in the outdoor environment. This helps them access fresh air and exercise each day outside their home environment.

Staff enhance their curriculum with a superb range of first-hand experiences linked to children's emerging interests. This is demonstrated when staff identify that children are interested in birds in their environment. To encourage more birds to visit their garden, staff take children to buy bird feeders. Children hang these in the trees and eagerly use binoculars to observe and identify birds.

Children are highly motivated, happy learners who cooperate with others superbly. For instance, they invite their friends to play. They sit on cushions and pull blankets over their knees. Children select books together and become engrossed in their self-chosen learning, taking turns to hold 'The Gruffalo's Child', turn pages and make animal sounds as they read the book together.

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

- All staff share an outstanding understanding of the curriculum vision and implement this exceptionally well in their practice. They provide high-quality real-life opportunities for children to build on their prior learning and explore and investigate their wider world. This helps children develop extremely positive attitudes to their learning. For example, children learn how to look after chickens in their garden. They collect their eggs and use them in their own cooking activities. Staff teach children how to grow herbs and vegetables. Children chop vegetables and explore herbs using their senses and then use them to make play dough 'pizzas'.
- Children have a highly effective understanding of people and families beyond their own. For instance, staff take them on regular visits to their neighbouring care home. Children enjoy singing to residents, reading stories with them and showing them their learning. Residents also visit the nursery and join in with children's messy play. This helps children to develop high levels of respect for others.

- Staff provide excellent opportunities to promote children's physical development and good health. This is illustrated when they encourage children to take risks in their physical play. For example, children climb trees and move along obstacle courses that they create from resources in their environment. Staff create an exceptionally calming and safe outdoor sleep environment and children benefit from high-quality rest and relaxation time in the fresh air.
- Staff develop outstanding partnerships with parents. For example, they get to know children and families from their initial contact during home visits. Staff have high expectations for all children's achievement. They work with parents of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities exceptionally well to help to ensure that their provision is inclusive. This is demonstrated when staff and parents create detailed care and learning plans together to agree strategies that they will use to support children's needs, such as physical and behaviour needs. Following discussions, staff adapt their environment, resources and approaches to help to support children superbly. This promotes a consistent approach for children and helps them to be successful in their learning and in managing their feelings and behaviour.
- Staff provide highly effective guidance for parents to support their children's learning. For example, they arrange parent meetings with teachers from schools that children transfer to, to help parents understand how they can help prepare children for school. They seek and respond to parents' views exceptionally well. For instance, staff learn to teach children yoga in nursery. Parents report that their children enjoy this and want to do yoga at home. In response to this, staff teach parents yoga activities that they can recreate. Parents report that they now enjoy 'family yoga' activities.
- Leaders act with exceptional integrity and respect staff well-being. For instance, they hold training days for staff within working hours. This allows staff to enhance their subject knowledge and pursue their own interests. Managers encourage staff to further their skills and provide study support time for staff completing qualifications. An employee engagement manager supports staff with any issues that arise relating to their health and well-being. Staff report that they feel highly supported in their roles.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The management team ensures that staff keep their safeguarding knowledge up to date. For instance, it tests staff knowledge in staff meetings. All staff have an excellent understanding of how to deal with concerns about children's welfare. They are familiar with the whistleblowing policy and local safeguarding procedures for reporting allegations. They have an exceptional understanding of the signs and symptoms which may indicate that children are at risk of harm, including of radical and extreme views. Leaders ensure that recruitment procedures are robust and ensure that staff are suitable to work with children.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY447040
Local authority	Milton Keynes
Inspection number	10060313
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children	1 to 4
Total number of places	56
Number of children on roll	82
Name of registered person	Acorn Early Years Foundation
Registered person unique reference number	RP901362
Telephone number	01908 200 281
Date of previous inspection	25 June 2015

Information about this early years setting

Acorn at Kents Hill re-registered in 2012. It is based in the residential area of Kents Hill in Milton Keynes. The nursery employs 21 staff, of whom 19 work with children and 13 hold relevant qualifications. The nursery receives free early education funding for children aged two, three and four years. It is open weekdays from 7.30am to 6pm for 49 weeks of the year.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Lisa Dailey

Inspection activities

- The inspector went on a learning walk with the manager.
- The manager and inspector carried out a joint observation of an activity which followed children's interests.
- The inspector talked with parents and listened to their views about the nursery and their children's progress.
- The manager and the inspector held a meeting. The inspector looked at relevant documentation and evidence of suitability of persons working in the nursery.
- The inspector spoke to children throughout the inspection and observed their play in the indoor and outdoor environment.

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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