

Inspection of Acorn at Westcroft

4 Wimborne Crescent, Westcroft, MILTON KEYNES MK4 4DE

Inspection date: 16 January 2025

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

The provider develops a flexible and highly ambitious curriculum to encourage children's healthy development. Outdoor learning plays an integral part of the curriculum, which is very well-sequenced to ensure that all children enjoy the benefits from learning in a natural environment. This includes very young babies, who develop a strong desire to explore the world around them.

All staff believe that children are capable from birth. Staff give children the confidence they need to explore, take manageable risks and be tenacious when trying new experiences. Many children demonstrate development that by far exceeds expectations for their age. For example, very young children can use the toilet, wash their hands and drink from an open cup. Toddlers are developing into confident talkers who can count up to large numbers, and older children read complicated words by sounding out the letters.

The nursery is a hive of busy, meaningful learning. All children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), thrive in the supportive, nurturing care of the highly skilled staff team. Children show that they are settled, feel secure and are eager to engage with adults to share their learning. Children always behave well and show compassion and care for each other, creating a happy and calm atmosphere.

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

- Staff across the nursery understand the intent of the curriculum and put it into practice effectively. All staff, from the most highly qualified to staff who are as yet unqualified, show a deep awareness of the curriculum and the children that they care for. They understand exactly what children need to learn and how to help them to make rapid progress in their development. Consequently, children enjoy purposeful learning throughout the day. They test out what they know to embed learning and gain essential skills they need for the future.
- Children are collaborators in shaping a curriculum that ignites their enthusiasm and passion for learning. The provider is committed to providing a sustainable, eco-friendly nursery. Staff educate children to be conscious about looking after their local area and wider world. This is presented in learning opportunities that are both motivating and interesting, such as litter picking, recycling and learning about local birds and wildlife.
- Access to bespoke training within the organisation supports staff and parents to deepen their knowledge and learn together. This helps parents and staff to have a cohesive approach to important matters, such as managing children's behaviour and supporting toilet training. Consequently, relationships with parents are strong and shared care and communication between the nursery

and families supports children's excellent development.

- Children with SEND make excellent progress at the nursery. Staff are highly alert to what children's needs are and know how to support them. They set realistic targets and next steps for children. By doing so, progress is evident, and planning and reviews move at pace, helping to ensure that children are continually experiencing teaching that keeps them motivated and challenged.
- The key-person approach is well organised and ensures that every child has a supportive adult to care for them. Home visits encourage staff to get to know children and their families from the very beginning. Children's home routines are known and understood by staff who follow these precisely in the nursery. Children's dietary needs are met well, and staff supervise young children intently when they eat to ensure their safety.
- Staff ensure that they expose children to different experiences and books to broaden their understanding of the diverse world that they live in. Staff help children to learn about their local community and gain a sense of belonging. For example, staff play nursery rhymes in children's home languages and talk with children about their families. This boosts their sense of identity.
- The provider and senior team have superb oversight of all aspects of the nursery. There is a clear and well-structured development plan for staff that increases their skills and continually improves their practice. The provider motivates staff to undertake further training, and this has an evident beneficial impact on their confidence and knowledge. Staff translate this extensive knowledge into their excellent practice and the exciting curriculum they provide.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY447038
Local authority	Milton Keynes
Inspection number	10367595
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 at time of inspection	0 to 4
Total number of places	92
Number of children on roll	90
Name of registered person	Acorn Early Years Foundation
Registered person unique reference number	RP901362
Telephone number	01908 506 793
Date of previous inspection	14 February 2019

Information about this early years setting

Acorn at Westcroft Nursery registered in 2012. It operates from a purpose-built building in Westcroft district shopping area. The nursery employs 25 members of childcare staff. Of these, 16 hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 2 and above. The nursery opens Monday to Friday, all year round. Sessions are from 7.30am until 6pm. The setting offers government funded places for children aged nine months to four years and children in receipt of funding for disadvantage.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Hayley Marshall-Gowen

Inspection activities

- The inspector discussed the intent of the curriculum and observed its implementation during activities indoors and outdoors and assessed the impact this has on children's learning.
- A joint observation was completed and discussed with the manager.
- During the inspection, the inspector held a meeting with the manager and senior staff. She looked at relevant documentation, such as evidence of the suitability of staff working in the nursery.
- The inspector spoke with staff and children at suitable times throughout the inspection.
- Parents were invited to share their views with the inspector. Several parents discussed their views during the inspection, and the inspector took account of all feedback received.

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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