

Inspection of Acornwood Pre-School

8 Links Way, FARNBOROUGH, Hampshire GU14 0NA

Inspection date: 7 July 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	Inadequate
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What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children enjoy their time at the pre-school. They build strong bonds with the nurturing and supportive staff. Where children need extra help with settling into morning routines, staff offer reassurance to help less confident children. They recognise and respond to the differing needs of children well. Children quickly immerse themselves in self-chosen play, as staff create a welcoming environment. Staff are positive role models and have high expectations for children's behaviour. Children listen to staff and respond to their requests, such as tidying up toys before mealtimes.

Leaders and staff have created a curriculum that focuses on priorities for children's learning. Staff recognise the focus on building children's communication skills and their physical development. They create opportunities for children to develop their core muscle skills, coordination and control, through activities they plan and provide. For instance, older children learn how to balance along low-level wooden paths, crossing with ease. Where children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), need additional help with speaking and attention skills, staff work on these priorities. Swift intervention and a targeted focus on teaching helps gaps in children's learning and development to close quickly. This helps to ensure that all children make good progress from their starting points.

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

- Leaders and staff have worked with their local authority to successfully address the actions raised at the last inspection. New staff have joined the team and are enthusiastic and dedicated in their roles. Leaders have reviewed and improved staffing, including ensuring that the team members understand their individual roles and responsibilities and how to implement these. There is a shared vision to provide children with high-quality care and learning experiences that lay good foundations for future learning.
- Staff place children's welfare as a high priority. Staff ensure that individual dietary needs are met, through information shared with parents when children first start and on an ongoing basis. Mealtimes have been reviewed and improved. Leaders ensure that staff have had training to help them understand how to prepare and serve foods to minimise any risk to children as they eat. Staff ensure that they supervise children closely at snack times and mealtimes. These routines help to promote children's safety and welfare.
- Staff model positive behaviour and teach children about the importance of sharing and taking turns. Children listen carefully to staff and follow instructions confidently. For instance, staff explain why it is not kind to knock down brick towers children have built. However, sometimes older children rely on staff to resolve small disagreements between friends. At times, staff do not always

extend this further by supporting children to resolve conflicts for themselves independent of staff interventions.

- Staff working with children with SEND have good knowledge of their key children. Since the last inspection, staff have improved how they work with parents and other agencies that can support children's needs. Staff assess what children need to help them make the progress they are capable of. For instance, visual picture references help promote children's early communication. Children are able to share what they want to support their choices. Staff and leaders regularly review the plans for supporting children with SEND and involve parents and other partners. This ensures that children with SEND make good progress and that those at risk of falling behind receive the support they need in a timely manner.
- Leaders plan a balanced curriculum that is tailored to meet children's individual needs and abilities. They understand how to sequence learning to help children build on their existing skills and knowledge. However, less consideration is given to the implementation of the curriculum for mathematics. Staff do not consistently support children to develop and build on their use of number, shape and measure during their play.
- Staff recognise and value the unique needs of children. When children first start, they create 'family cubes' and boards using photos of important people in their lives. Staff use these to promote discussions about different cultures in the community. However, sometimes staff miss opportunities to extend children's sense of identity, to reflect on their unique family structure and to help them value and respect the differences and similarities between themselves and their friends.

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:

- extend opportunities for children to learn to resolve conflicts for themselves to broaden their social skills
- continue to embed the curriculum to have a focus on clearer learning intentions, particularly around mathematics
- provide further opportunities for children to learn about equality, diversity and inclusion so that children know what makes them unique.

Setting details

Unique reference number	109949
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	10409410
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	2 to 4
Total number of places	26
Number of children on roll	31
Name of registered person	Acornwood Pre-School Committee
Registered person unique reference number	RP517938
Telephone number	07923501324
Date of previous inspection	26 March 2025

Information about this early years setting

Acornwood Pre-School registered in 1987. It operates from Southwood Community Centre in Farnborough, Hampshire. The pre-school is open from 9am to 2.45pm, Monday to Thursday, during term time. There are seven members of childcare staff who work at the setting. Of these, four hold relevant early years qualifications at level 2 or above, and one is a qualified teacher. The pre-school provides government-funded early education for eligible children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector
Tara Naylor

Inspection activities

- The manager explained the curriculum intentions to the inspector during the learning walk.
- The inspector took part in discussions with managers and staff during the inspection.
- Parents shared their views of the setting with the inspector.
- The children spoke to the inspector about what they enjoy doing at the pre-school.
- The inspector observed the quality of education being provided, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact that this is having on the children's learning.
- Staff spoke to the inspector about how they support children with SEND.

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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