

# Inspection of Acorn Nursery

Ministry of Defence, Mail Centre, Main Building, Horse Guards Avenue, Whitehall,  
LONDON SW1A 2HB

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Inspection date: 10 November 2023

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## **What is it like to attend this early years setting?**

### **The provision is good**

Leaders and managers have made good progress with the required improvements since the last inspection. The acting manager is passionate about her role and her enthusiasm shines through. She works hard to ensure that children, families and staff enjoy positive experiences at the nursery, and gives their well-being the highest priority. The acting manager demonstrates a clear understanding of the aims of the educational programme provided for children. Her high-reaching ambition is for each child to develop as an individual, be proud of their uniqueness and leave the nursery ready to access the next stage in their education. This ethos runs throughout the nursery team.

Staff in the baby room are warm and caring. They provide a thoughtful settling-in process which ensures that, even for those children that are very new, the nursery day is a calm and nurturing experience. Staff meet babies' individual needs very well. They know babies' routines and read their cues intuitively. It is clear that babies are happy and feel secure in the care of familiar adults. Sleeping arrangements for children are safe. Staff speak softly and sensitively to all babies, sometimes using signing to help with communication. Babies' language skills benefit from hearing the spoken word and songs throughout the day.

Leaders have given careful thought to how to support older children's behaviour following the previous inspection. Children are beginning to manage their own feelings and, with patient support, learn how to resolve any minor conflicts with their peers that may arise during their play. As a result, children are able to engage and focus on the many varied learning experiences that are available to them.

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

- Children are greeted warmly by the acting manager and staff team. Staff are keen to know how children are feeling. They work hard to create a friendly and homely setting that provides support for children and their parents. Staff have introduced 'colour monsters' that depict emotions. This helps children to identify, understand and respond to the feelings they, and their friends, experience.
- Babies enjoy a wide range of sensory experiences. They explore raw vegetables using sight, smell and touch. Babies bang small pans together to make music and develop their physical skills as they climb in and out of the ball pit. Older babies are encouraged to learn to walk, initially pulling themselves up to a standing position. Staff talk gently to children, showing them care and respect. For example, staff ask babies if it is alright to blow their noses.
- In the toddler and pre-school room, children can participate in a full range of activities to develop their skills and knowledge across all areas of learning. These are engaging and fun and most children join in happily. Staff build on children's

interests. For example, following a trip to Paris with their families, children have made a model of the Eiffel Tower. Children thoroughly enjoy mixing 'potions' in a cauldron, practising their filling and pouring skills. However, despite leaders role modelling effective communications, and providing clear information and a lively narrative to children's play, some staff's interactions to support children's play in this room are not always of the same quality. Some staff speak infrequently and less enthusiastically to children.

- Core staff know the children for who they have special responsibility very well. They provide activities that they know will excite them and extend their learning. For example, when older children practise throwing balls indoors, staff incorporate the use of number into this activity by asking children to measure how far they have thrown. Staff introduce mathematical language throughout the day. For instance, they ask children about the height of towers they have built. During mealtimes, staff continue to challenge children's thinking by asking how many spoonfuls they have left.
- The educational programme to support children's understanding of the world is a positive feature of the nursery. Staff make best use of the wonderful opportunities the local environment offers. Children have been on visits to Scotland Yard and had a ride on police motorcycles. They take the harvest from the nursery's food bank to Westminster Abbey. Staff strongly promote values such as democracy and tolerance. Children become confident to make their voice heard. Older children vote for their choice of outing and babies choose which colour they would like to paint the autumn leaves.
- Parents that spoke to the inspector are full of praise for the leadership team. They comment that their children cannot wait to come to nursery and they light up when they see staff's faces. Parents describe staff as always being patient and kind. They really appreciate how staff build core values among all children.
- The acting manager is an active and positive presence in the nursery. Together with the room leaders, she is a good role model for others to learn from. The acting manager is rightly proud of the teamwork and the changes that have taken place since the previous inspection. Staff feel well supported and enjoy working at the nursery. They receive regular feedback on their practice. Recruitment and induction is a thorough and robust process. Staff have access to many training and developmental opportunities.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The safety and welfare of children are given a high priority throughout the nursery. Children learn about road safety on their walks to the park. They know the meaning of the red and green man at the crossing points. Indoors, staff routinely check the premises to ensure that there are no hazards, such as wet floors that children could slip on. Staff understand their role in child protection. There is information to support their knowledge throughout the nursery and they undertake mandatory training. The acting manager ensures that staff's knowledge is up to date. Staff know how to report and, if necessary, escalate any concerns they have

about the abuse of children. They are aware of the procedure to follow if they have concerns about the behaviour of another member of staff.

### **What does the setting need to do to improve?**

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

- continue with coaching and mentoring staff, especially those caring for the older age group, to ensure that all interactions and experiences for children are of equally high quality.

## Setting details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	EY286501
<b>Local authority</b>	Westminster
<b>Inspection number</b>	10266598
<b>Type of provision</b>	Childcare on non-domestic premises
<b>Registers</b>	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
<b>Day care type</b>	Full day care
<b>Age range of children at time of inspection</b>	0 to 4
<b>Total number of places</b>	38
<b>Number of children on roll</b>	35
<b>Name of registered person</b>	Bright Horizons Family Solutions Limited
<b>Registered person unique reference number</b>	RP901358
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 3780 3011
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	15 November 2022

## Information about this early years setting

Acorn Nursery is a workplace setting and is part of the Bright Horizons Family Solutions company. It registered in 2004 and is situated in the London Borough of Westminster. The nursery is open Monday to Friday, from 8am to 6pm, for 51 weeks of the year. It receives funding to provide early education for children aged three and four years. There are 16 members of staff, of whom two hold qualified teacher status and six hold childcare qualifications at level 2 or 3.

## Information about this inspection

### Inspector

Penny Fisher

## Inspection activities

- The inspector discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the acting manager and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the nursery.
- The acting manager and inspector completed a learning walk together of all areas of the nursery and discussed the early years educational programme.
- Staff spoke to the inspector during the inspection.
- The inspector observed the quality of education being provided, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact on children's learning.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation of a planned activity with the acting manager.
- The inspector spoke to, and read emails from, several parents and took account of their views.
- The inspector looked at relevant documentation.
- Children spoke to and communicated with the inspector throughout the inspection.

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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