

Acorns Day Nursery

36 Alphington Road, Exeter, EX2 8HN



Inspection date

25 August 2017

Previous inspection date

19 February 2014

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
	Previous inspection:	Good	2
Effectiveness of the leadership and management		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Outstanding	1
Personal development, behaviour and welfare		Outstanding	1
Outcomes for children		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents

This provision is outstanding

- All groups of children make rapid progress. Older children develop excellent concentration and imagination as they talk together about the games they are playing and are well prepared for school. Younger children express delight as they make squiggles in foam and learn names of shapes they make.
- Staff are highly skilled, rapidly adapting activities so that children's ideas are fully incorporated. Every two weeks they assess children's progress, determine the next steps and suggest specific activities that motivate and interest the child. Parents find this really helpful to support learning at home.
- Children are exceptionally secure. The youngest children become highly effective communicators, establishing strong attachments to the sensitive caring staff and friendships with each other.
- The manager works highly effectively with other managers in the group to evaluate the nursery. This has resulted, for example, in excellent focus for any observations of teaching, which has significantly improved practice for all staff. The management team seeks the view of parents and responds quickly to their suggestions.
- Nursery staff work highly effectively with other professionals to meet the specific medical needs of children. They ensure that there is a smooth transition to school.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- continue to build on the excellent knowledge and skills of all staff in the early development of children's mathematical awareness of key concepts.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed teaching and learning in all four areas of the nursery and outdoors.
- The inspector had discussions with parents and took their views into account.
- The inspector talked to children and staff.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation of teaching and learning with the manager.
- The inspector met with the manager of this nursery and the practice manager of the group of nurseries.

Inspector

Janet Dinsmore

Inspection findings

Effectiveness of the leadership and management is outstanding

The recommendations from the previous inspection have been fully addressed. Managers ensure all staff are well trained to continually develop all children's language throughout all the activities during the day. For example, continual conversation while children explore imaginative play and learn letters and sounds. Staff are considering how to develop children's excellent mathematical understanding even further. Managers check key persons' precise assessments to ensure there are no gaps in learning between vulnerable groups and other children. They plan to meet the precise needs of children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, ensuring they receive excellent support. Managers have the highest expectations of all staff. The whole staff team continually seeks out new ideas to improve. Safeguarding is effective. Staff are vigilant and know exactly what to report and whom to report to if they have any concerns.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is outstanding

Staff use their expert knowledge of child development to understand each individual child and assess their progress accurately. They are continually providing challenging activities. For example, one younger child said, 'that was hard', when asked to find different numbers of objects. Staff question children sensitively and use this to help extend their knowledge, for example, when identifying the initial sounds of planets and vehicles. Staff follow children's interests exceptionally well. For example, using excellent stories, staff question children about the relationships between different dinosaurs, and children use this knowledge when making and constructing models from dough and spaghetti. Staff working with the youngest children use every opportunity to help them learn, for example, they retell stories when changing nappies.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare are outstanding

Children choose where and what they will play with, independently selecting from a wide range of well-prepared resources for role play. For example, they took different roles in a hospital and shops. They cooperate well, for example, taking turns to serve their food at lunchtime and dishing it up for their friends. They understand and can discuss the food they are eating, saying, 'broccoli makes you strong'. Staff give them accurate information about the healthy food that is prepared for them, further extending children's knowledge and understanding exceptionally well. Staff communicate highly effectively with parents, especially when children have specific medical needs, and the nursery is highly inclusive.

Outcomes for children are outstanding

Older children are highly curious, for example, they use letter tiles and their knowledge of the sounds to form simple words. They can count accurately and know how to add one more. The youngest children highly value books and learn to name objects and communicate their needs highly effectively. Younger children explore avidly and learn, for example, how ice melts and how many small cups of liquid will fill a larger one. Children learning English as an additional language and in receipt of additional funding catch up rapidly.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY341932
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	1068810
Type of provision	Full-time provision
Day care type	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Registers	Early Years Register
Age range of children	0 - 4
Total number of places	68
Number of children on roll	101
Name of registered person	SPL Education Ltd
Registered person unique reference number	RP525524
Date of previous inspection	19 February 2014
Telephone number	01392 272621

Acorns Day Nursery opens from 7.45am until 6.15pm on weekdays throughout the year. It opened in 1996 and re-registered under the ownership of SPL Education Limited in 2006. It is one of a group of four nurseries with links to St Peter's Preparatory School. The nursery receives funding to provide free early years education for two-, three- and four-year-olds. There are 23 staff. Of these, the manager has early years professional status and 13 others have early years qualifications; one at level 5, one at level 4, eight at level 3 and three at level 2. There are eight other unqualified staff, including cleaners and a cook.

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