

# Acorn Pre-School & The Mighty Oaks

School Lane, SHEFFORD, Bedfordshire, SG17 5XA



<b>Inspection date</b>	30 November 2017
Previous inspection date	28 February 2017

	<b>This inspection:</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The quality and standards of the early years provision</b>	Previous inspection:	Requires Improvement	3
Effectiveness of the leadership and management		Good	2
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Good	2
Personal development, behaviour and welfare		Good	2
Outcomes for children		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents

### This provision is good

- Since the last inspection, the provider, new manager and staff have made many improvements to their practice. They have given high priority to addressing actions that ensure children's safety and well-being. Changes to the way staff complete registers helps to ensure children's attendance is more closely monitored.
- Staff make regular observations and assessments of children's learning. These are used effectively, to inform planning and support children's ongoing good progress. Staff regularly share children's development records with parents and with any other settings where children attend. This helps to promote continuity in children's learning.
- Children of all ages play together well and their behaviour is good. They listen well to staff and are keen to help set up the daily activities.
- Parents speak highly of the staff and appreciate the nurturing environment where children feel safe and secure. They feel the good education the children receive prepares them well for starting school.

### It is not yet outstanding because:

- At times, younger children do not have the same opportunities to be actively involved in adult-led activities as the older children.
- Staff do not help children to fully extend their thinking skills and explain why they make particular decisions.

## What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- provide further opportunities for the youngest children to take an active part in adult-led activities
- increase the opportunities children have to express their thoughts and ideas, to help them develop their critical-thinking skills further.

### Inspection activities

- The inspector observed staff's teaching and interactions with children indoors and outdoors.
- The inspector spoke to staff and children, and held discussions with the chairperson of the committee and the manager.
- The inspector observed an adult-led activity with the manager and held a discussion with her about children's learning.
- The inspector looked at a sample of paperwork, including staff qualifications and suitability checks of staff and committee members. The safeguarding policies and procedures were also seen.
- The inspector spoke to a number of parents and took account of their views.

### Inspector

Jill Hardaker

## Inspection findings

### Effectiveness of the leadership and management is good

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Staff have a robust knowledge and understanding of the signs and symptoms that may indicate concerns about children's welfare. Staff regularly complete safeguarding training and give high priority to identifying and effectively minimising risks to children. The provider follows rigorous recruitment procedures to help ensure staff are suitable to work with children. Staff performance is monitored through supervision meetings and targeted professional development. Staff talk about the positive impact training has had on their understanding of how children learn and develop. The manager and staff are well qualified and highly reflective about their practice. They observe each other leading activities and giving constructive feedback. This helps all members of staff to continually improve their teaching skills.

### Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

The motivated staff team has a good understanding of how children learn. They organise the environment indoors and outdoors very successfully. For example, they provide plenty of opportunities for children to make independent choices and initiate their own play. Children enjoy learning about different textures and materials. Staff set up exciting activities, such as an arctic world scene. Children explore foam and ice, and staff help them to build up their language skills, for example as they ask them to describe what they feel. Staff gather comprehensive information from parents and use this information effectively to help identify children's starting points in learning. They successfully track children's ongoing development and this helps them to close any emerging gaps in their learning.

### Personal development, behaviour and welfare are good

Staff are caring and attentive, and this helps to support children's well-being effectively. They recognise when children require reassurance, such as when separating from their parents. For example, key persons help children to settle by sitting with them to share their favourite stories. Children show high levels of independence and develop good self-care skills. Staff encourage children to complete tasks for themselves, such as at snack times and when using the bathroom. Children have many opportunities to be outdoors. They practise their good physical skills, for example as they ride around in toy cars and throw balls into hoops. Staff make sure children learn how to stay warm on cold days. They encourage them to wear appropriate clothing and to be active outdoors.

### Outcomes for children are good

Children are developing good early writing skills. They particularly enjoy using light boards for drawing and writing with wipe off pens. Staff help children to write for a purpose and make shopping lists with them in the role play area. Children develop a good understanding of mathematical concepts, such as when measuring dry ingredients as they make dough and counting how many spoonfuls of liquid they need. Children are developing into independent learners and are well prepared for their next stages of learning and ultimately for school.

## Setting details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	EY371758
<b>Local authority</b>	Central Bedfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	1086681
<b>Type of provision</b>	Full-time provision
<b>Day care type</b>	Childcare - Non-Domestic
<b>Registers</b>	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
<b>Age range of children</b>	2 - 14
<b>Total number of places</b>	26
<b>Number of children on roll</b>	88
<b>Name of registered person</b>	Acorn Playgroup (Shefford) Committee
<b>Registered person unique reference number</b>	RP908422
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	28 February 2017
<b>Telephone number</b>	01462 816281

Acorn Pre-School & The Mighty Oaks registered in 2008. The setting employs 13 members of childcare staff. Of these, 11 hold appropriate early years qualifications between level 2 and level 5. The setting opens from Monday to Friday, during term time, from 7.45am to 6pm. Within this time, children may also attend an out-of-school club. The setting provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

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