

# Inspection of The Acorn Nursery School

Cranleigh Infant School, Church Lane, Cranleigh, Surrey GU6 8AR

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Inspection date:

22 May 2025

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## **Overall effectiveness**

## **Outstanding**

The quality of education

**Outstanding**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Outstanding**

Personal development

**Outstanding**

Leadership and management

**Outstanding**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Outstanding

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

### **The provision is outstanding**

The highly skilled staff prioritise the happiness and well-being of all the children in their care. They nurture children in a way that makes them feel loved and cared for. As a result, children arrive excited to start their day. Staff expertly interweave different areas of the curriculum into their practice and place a strong importance on using 'books as hooks' to support children's learning. For example, the story 'Jasper's Beanstalk' prompted the staff and children to plant vegetables, such as potatoes, beans and peas. The story 'Handa's Surprise' prompted discussions about healthy eating, and staff then set up a display to show parents how much sugar is in different foods.

Across the nursery, the children have delighted in watching how caterpillars turn into butterflies. Toddlers watch in awe as they release their butterflies and say 'goodbye' as they fly away. Older children become engrossed in creating abstract art inspired by the artist Wassily Kandinsky. They use their large and small muscles to add different colours and textures for effect, such as pieces of material, paint and coffee granules. Children of all ages are very well behaved. Staff teach children effective social skills right from the start. For example, younger children are already mastering the skills of turn taking, using a sand timer to wait their turn to have a go on the bikes outside. Those with the bikes respect the wishes of their peers and readily let their friends have a turn.

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

- The management team invests heavily in its staff. It is quick to address any areas for improvement that are identified. For example, managers have recently carried out a complete overhaul of their provision in relation to staff supervisions and now place a much greater emphasis on ensuring staff have a robust knowledge of safeguarding. Staff place children's happiness and welfare at the heart of everything they do.
- Managers and staff are highly attuned to the needs of all children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They work closely with parents and quickly seek support from other professionals to devise targeted strategies and ensure children receive ongoing support. Additional funding is used exceptionally well to enhance the quality of children's experiences, such as through the provision of focused sessions on language development to boost children's communication skills.
- Staff know the children incredibly well and are highly responsive to their interests. For example, they notice when children display repeated patterns of behaviour known as 'schemas' and adapt the environment to facilitate this important stage of play. For instance, staff working with older children noticed their interest in transporting objects from one area to another, so they devised a

pulley system for them to transport sand to the mud kitchen.

- All children choose to spend a lot of time outside. They thoroughly enjoy their forest school and physical education sessions run by trained staff. Children excitedly explore the nursery grounds, currently benefitting from initiatives followed by staff to allow wildflowers to grow and support pollinators. Children hunt for bugs and are eager to tell visitors what they have found. They learn new words, such as 'elytra', as staff teach them about the beetles they have seen.
- Staff consistently model respectful behaviour and boundaries. Children demonstrate their understanding of the rules and show exemplary consideration to others. For example, children learn a sense of democracy as they vote for their favourite stories. When older children want to have a turn in the hammock, they write their names on a board so that others can see whose turn it is next. This also supports children to practise writing for a purpose.
- Mathematics is skilfully interwoven through activities for all age groups. For instance, younger children hunt for coloured shapes in the sand and talk about what they have found. Older children learn about prediction and measuring during a sunflower project. They contribute to a class book where they record their predictions as to how tall their sunflowers are going to grow and how long it is going to take.
- The phrase 'above and beyond' is heard a lot when speaking to parents to seek their views. Parents are very happy with all aspects of their children's care and education. They become involved in nursery life as staff organise 'stay and play' sessions at weekends for parents who work during the week. Some parents become class representatives and organise social events, while others enjoy coming into nursery as a 'mystery reader'. Parents greatly appreciate the workshops that staff organise, such as sessions on mathematics to help them to support their children's learning at home.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

## Setting details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	119925
<b>Local authority</b>	Surrey
<b>Inspection number</b>	10388192
<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>	Sessional day care
<b>Age range of children at time of inspection</b>	2 to 4
<b>Total number of places</b>	109
<b>Number of children on roll</b>	100
<b>Name of registered person</b>	Crowder, Pauline
<b>Registered person unique reference number</b>	RP511987
<b>Telephone number</b>	01483 271976
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	1 July 2019

## Information about this early years setting

The Acorn Nursery School registered in 1994 and is situated in Cranleigh, Surrey. The nursery school is open Monday to Friday, term-time only, from 9am until 3pm. It also offers a breakfast club from 7.45am. An after-school club is also available on Tuesdays and Thursdays until 5.45pm. The nursery school provides government funded early education places for children aged from two to four years. The nursery employs 22 staff who work directly with the children, 17 of whom hold appropriate childcare qualifications at level 2 and above.

## Information about this inspection

### Inspector

Nicky Hill

## Inspection activities

- The manager and inspector completed a learning walk together of all areas of the nursery and discussed the early years curriculum.
- Children spoke with the inspector during the inspection.
- The inspector talked to staff at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The inspector spoke with the registered individual and the manager about the leadership and management of the setting.
- The inspector observed the quality of education being provided, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact that this was having on children's learning.
- The inspector and manager carried out a joint observation of an activity.
- Parents shared their views of the setting with the inspector.

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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