

The Acorns Day Nursery



St. Stephens Junior School, Hales Drive, CANTERBURY, Kent CT2 7AD

Inspection date	14 August 2019
Previous inspection date	21 November 2013

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	Good	2
	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
Effectiveness of 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

- The manager evaluates the provision well. She includes the views of parents and children to help identify areas for further improvement. For example, she has significantly enhanced the opportunities to extend the children's learning outdoors.
- Staff effectively enhance children's communication and language skills. For example, they clearly emphasise key words throughout their interactions and use clear visual signs to help babies' and children's understanding and speaking skills. All children make progress in their learning from their starting points.
- Staff prioritise children's emotional security and expertly help them to prepare for their next stage of learning and move to a new room. Staff plan this transition meticulously to ensure that children have the skills and confidence to manage the change successfully. They prepare children well in advance for changes, such as mealtimes when babies move to the toddler room.
- Children and babies are happy and settled in their nursery environment, which is welcoming and organised well to enable them to follow their play choices.
- Staff do not fully include parents in the initial assessment of their child's development to further enhance its accuracy.
- Staff do not consistently extend children's understanding of mathematical concepts such as counting and size.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- strengthen parents' input into the initial assessments of children's development to enhance their accuracy
- make the most of opportunities to consistently challenge children to count and to compare sizes to enhance their mathematical skills.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed the quality of teaching and children's activities, completed a joint observation with the manager and held discussions about children's progress and learning.
- The inspector held conversations with the manager, staff and children throughout the inspection.
- The inspector checked evidence of staff suitability checks and their qualifications, and sampled relevant policies and procedures.
- The inspector took into account the views of the parents during the inspection.
- The inspector observed staff planning documentation and the children's assessment records.

Inspector

Kimberley Luckham

Inspection findings

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

The manager continually improves the quality of staff practice. For example, she organises relevant training and individual support to keep staff knowledge and understanding up to date and effectively keep children safe. Staff make links with other settings children attend. For example, they share developmental information, and this helps to provide good continuity of care and education. The manager effectively monitors children's progress to close any emerging gaps. For example, staff have effectively implemented strategies to successfully enhance children's understanding and language skills, particularly for those children who speak English as an additional language. Safeguarding is effective. The manager and staff keep their safeguarding knowledge up to date and are fully aware of current legislation. They understand their role in child protection and know the reporting process to follow if they have concerns about a child.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

Staff gather detailed information from parents about children's interests and development at home. They use this well to help them build on children's learning experiences. Staff accurately assess individual children's levels of development and effectively plan for the next steps in their learning in partnership with parents. Staff provide children with good opportunities to think for themselves and share their ideas further. For example, they challenge children effectively to consider the effects different-sized ramps will have on the cars as they roll down. Staff give children clear explanations to enhance their learning, for instance explaining how the steeper ramp enables the car to move down better.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare are good

Children are encouraged to be polite and have a good understanding of sharing and taking turns. Staff build on children's and babies' confidence and sense of belonging well. For example, they consistently praise them for their achievements and success. Staff help children to develop their awareness of healthy lifestyles. For example, they provide a choice of nutritious snacks and meals, and engage children in conversations about healthy food choices. The key-person system works well and relationships between staff, children and babies are strong. Staff are sensitive and responsive to their needs.

Outcomes for children are good

Children develop the skills needed for their future learning and move to school. For example, they are encouraged to give meanings to the marks they make as well as identifying and writing their own name. Children play and explore cooperatively together and confidently communicate their needs, ideas and views. Children develop a good understanding of diversity beyond their immediate family. For example, the environment includes positive cultural images, dual-language text and role-play resources. Children learn to welcome one another in their home language and gain a good understanding of the wider world.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY461957
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10108850
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children	0 - 4
Total number of places	42
Number of children on roll	46
Name of registered person	St. Stephen's Academy, Canterbury
Registered person unique reference number	RP902229
Date of previous inspection	21 November 2013
Telephone number	01227819648

The Acorns Day Nursery originally registered in 2009. It re-registered in 2013 and is privately owned by St Stephen's Academy, Canterbury. The provision operates from purpose-built premises in the grounds of St Stephen's Junior School in Canterbury, Kent. It is open Monday to Friday from 8am to 6pm, for 48 weeks of the year. Children aged three and four years receive funding for nursery education. The provider employs 16 members of staff, 14 of whom hold relevant early years qualifications.

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