

Inspection of ACE Nursery School

37 Parkside, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire CB1 1JE

Inspection date: 10 March 2022

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

Children form excellent bonds with the staff that care for them. They are confident, happy and caring towards their peers. The secure environment helps children to become very confident to make their own choices and express their ideas and views. Children gain an exceptionally strong sense of belonging and have the confidence to independently explore. Their emotional security is promoted through the consistent approach by staff to celebrate acts of kindness. This enables children to build strong friendships and show empathy for their peers. They offer help and support to younger children to overcome challenges. For example, pointing out which way up to wear the gardening gloves and assisting each other to link zips for outdoor play. The children's behaviour and social skills are excellent. This is encouraged by responsive staff offering praise. Children's acts of kindness are recognised and displayed, further reinforcing the nursery school's key message of being kind.

Children attending the nursery school enjoy an environment filled with stimulating activities and learning opportunities. Staff nurture children's enthusiasm for exploring and investigating. They provide opportunities for children to engage in the world around them through first-hand experiences. This includes the observation of growth and decay. For example, children grow pumpkins, harvest seeds and observe the effects of time on a squash before replanting the seeds. Children grow food for snack and collect water from the water butt to care for their seedlings, prior to transplanting them into their allotment. At snack time, children choose the foods they like and help to prepare them for eating with their friends. Children are encouraged to take responsibility for their environment, including composting waste, recycling and washing the dishes.

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

- The manager, parent committee and staff are dedicated to promoting the shared vision for the nursery school. The excellent partnership working is reflected in the positive attitudes of both staff and parents, that continually provide opportunities for the children and families to come together in the community for various celebrations and activities.
- The manager is committed to continually striving for excellence and oversees the running of the nursery school exceptionally well. This influences the entire staff team to drive for improvement. Staff say they are inspired by their management team and feel completely supported as they learn from the best.
- Children's behaviour and social skills are exemplary. They are kind and empathetic. Children support each other to overcome challenges and are able to resolve conflicts positively, as a result of the staff's consistently excellent role modelling.

- Children demonstrate high levels of engagement and motivation in the well-planned activities and experiences available throughout the nursery school. Staff know the children extremely well and plan well-thought-out opportunities for the children based on their interests, in order to capture their imaginations.
- The standard of teaching is very high and, as such, children make very good progress in their learning. Staff demonstrate superb skills in supporting children's communication and language development. They use a wide range of strategies to support children's individual needs. Children's vocabulary is expanded through rich and meaningful conversations. Staff demonstrate a genuine interest in what children have to say.
- Children's health is promoted through well devised activities to support their independence in self-care. Staff provide children with the skills to dress independently for the outdoor environment. Children access considerable time outdoors in all weathers, providing lots of opportunity for physical development. This includes digging and planting in the allotment to grow their own fruit and vegetables. Staff and children make good use of the green space opposite the nursery school and access the local gym.
- Parents speak glowingly about the staff and teaching at the nursery school. They provide excellent feedback about the progress their children make and the learning they bring home. Parents refer to the extraordinary lengths the staff have gone to in supporting them as a family and meeting their children's individual needs. For example, 'The nursery's very special ethos puts the whole child at the heart of everything it does, and our happy balanced child is testament to the outstanding provision at ACE.'
- The setting works exceedingly well with other professionals ensuring that children with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive highly effective tailored support and progress well.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are confident and secure in their safeguarding knowledge. They can recognise a wide range of signs and symptoms of abuse, including the risks associated with radicalisation. The systems in place are extremely effective and all staff fully understand the policies and procedures for keeping children safe and raising concerns should they occur. The nursery school has robust recruitment procedures that ensure all staff are suitable to work with children.

Setting details

Unique reference number	221549
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	10112979
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	2 to 4
Total number of places	40
Number of children on roll	54
Name of registered person	A.C.E. Nursery School (Cambridge) Limited
Registered person unique reference number	RP902799
Telephone number	01223 357181
Date of previous inspection	7 November 2013

Information about this early years setting

ACE Nursery School registered in 1993. The nursery school employs eight members of childcare staff, who all hold appropriate childcare qualifications from level 3 to 6. The nursery school opens from Monday to Friday during term time from 8.30am to 5.30pm. A holiday play scheme operates during school holidays. The setting provides funded early education for three and four year old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Louise Harris

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the provider received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the provider and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the nursery school.
- The manager joined the inspector on a learning walk and talked to the inspector about their curriculum and what they want their children to learn.
- The inspector talked to staff at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The special educational needs coordinator spoke to the inspector about how they support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- 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 carried out joint observations of group activities with the manager.
- Parents shared their views of the nursery school with the inspector.
- The inspector looked at relevant documentation and reviewed evidence of the suitability of staff working in the nursery school.

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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