



Ducklings Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY285200
Inspection date	18 January 2006
Inspector	Patricia Joan Latham
Setting Address	Wimborne Crescent, Westcroft, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire, MK4 4DB
Telephone number	01908 520563
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Registered person	Ducklings Limited
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day care

ABOUT THIS INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality of childcare and, if applicable, of nursery education. The inspection was carried out under Part XA Children Act 1989 as introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000 and, where nursery education is provided, under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004; the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding; and, where nursery education is provided, the *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration or 1 April 2004 whichever is the later.

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

For more information about early years inspections, please see the booklet *Are you ready for your inspection?* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Ducklings Pre-School is one of four pre-schools run by Ducklings Limited. It was originally registered in 1996 and re-registered under new management in 2002. It operates from the community hall in Westcroft, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire. The group has the use of several rooms and a fully enclosed outside play area. The pre-school is open during term time, Monday to Friday 09.15 to 14.30. Children may attend on a sessional basis with the group offering a lunch club.

There are currently 78 children aged from 2 to under 5 years on roll. Of these, 64 children receive funding for nursery education. The pre-school supports a number of children with special needs and some who speak English as an additional language. Children attend from the local and surrounding areas.

The pre-school employs eight staff. Four of the staff, including the manager, have appropriate early years qualifications and others are in the process of completing N.V.Q. level 3.

The pre-school has achieved accreditation from the Pre-school Learning Alliance.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children remain healthy because they learn the importance of good personal hygiene and healthy eating. They always wash their hands before eating and know to eat sandwiches before sweet things at lunchtime. Staff provide healthy food and drinks at snack time, and plan activities, such as a visit from the dentist, to raise children's understanding of how to keep their bodies healthy.

Staff follow good practice to maintain cleanliness and reduce the risk of cross infection to children. There is always staff with first aid training present, and accidents are recorded accurately. However, on a few occasions, some recordings go unsigned by carers, and written permission to administer aid in an emergency is not always obtained. This results in a potential risk to children's health.

Children take part in regular activities to promote their physical well-being. In dry weather staff make frequent use of the outside play area to provide children with fresh air and exercise. Indoors, children take part in daily activities to encourage their physical skills. They are skilful at climbing, balancing and using the space around them wisely.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Premises afford ample space for children to play and staff utilize the inside area well to present a wide range of good quality resources to support activities offered. Children have easy access to resources for all areas of play, such as imaginary and creative play, and to help develop physical and writing skills. The atmosphere within the group is friendly and welcoming, with the rooms used made as bright as possible with suitable posters and displays. There is direct access to a fully enclosed outside area. However this can not always be utilised to full advantage because of risks to children's safety.

Children are cared for in a safe environment, with all areas kept secure. Staff follow

clear procedures to maintain children's safety and safeguard their welfare. There is a clear child protection policy and any concerns are referred to relevant agencies as necessary.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The care of all children in the pre-school is good; they experience a very stimulating and caring environment. Staff build a good relationship with children and are very attentive to their needs, allowing them time to settle into the group at their own pace. This enables children to feel secure and happy. Children learn to play well together and they form good relationships. Staff act as good role models, supporting children in their play, engaging them in conversation and helping them become confident and independent. Children enjoy their time spent at the pre-school and are developing well.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good, and children are confident and eager to do activities. The curriculum spans all areas of learning, although some aspects are not regularly covered. Staff's interaction with children is good and time spent doing daily routine activities is utilised well to maximise children's learning. There are effective procedures to support children with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language. Staff are very skilful in providing individual support as needed. Staff know what learning stage children have reached and record their achievements clearly to indicate progress.

Children are developing good social and communication skills. Their language and vocabulary is developing well and they confidently speak out in group situations and engage each other in conversation as they play. Children enjoy looking at books and have daily practice of reading and writing their own name. They are encouraged to further their reading skills, and enjoyment of books, by taking books home. Children concentrate and persevere well to complete tasks, such as puzzles, and are competent at counting and recognising numbers and shapes. They enjoy recreating patterns but do not have many opportunities to practise number calculation or gain an understanding of length and measure.

Children are encouraged to explore and examine things around them, for example how ice melts and how magnets work. They have a growing understanding of their own world and it's customs, as well as a growing awareness and respect for the customs of others. Children enthusiastically design and build models, using a variety of materials, and use their imagination in art; they draw pictures of family members and leisure activities. Children work together well, sharing resources and negotiating roles as they post letters and buy things in their post office. Children enjoy exploring a variety of differing mediums, such as 'gloop' and shaving foam, enjoying the feel of the different textures. They enthusiastically sing songs each day and take part in music and dance activities. They have the opportunity to take part in movement and action games to improve their physical skills and coordination.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are developing self-esteem and a respect for others. Staff act as good role models, talking to children respectfully and ensuring all children have the same opportunities. They encourage children's independence and praise their achievements. Children demonstrate a growing awareness of their own, and other's needs and know they can call upon adults, and other children, when help is needed. Overall children's social, moral, cultural and spiritual development is fostered well.

Staff are good at meeting children's individual needs, offering good support to the less able and encouraging children to develop skills. Staff manage children's behaviour well and children have a good understanding of how to work and play together harmoniously. They happily help clear away things when requested and eagerly take on tasks such as helping at snack time.

Partnership with parents is good. The group runs an open door policy and parents are able to approach their child's key worker at any time, which promotes continuity of care for children. Parents are kept well informed about their child's progress; the group hold regular parents evenings and send out termly newsletters.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The staff organise the pre- school well to ensure children are cared for in a safe and caring environment. There is a rigorous interview and appointment policy to ensure properly qualified and experienced staff are employed. Staff are well supported by management and are encouraged to update their knowledge through relevant training courses. Staff work well as a team, co-operating to overcome problems and organising the daily routine to ensure children remain happy and engaged in activities. All necessary information regarding children is obtained, and required documents, such as attendance and accident recordings are maintained. Although, some paperwork is not checked to ensure it is accurate and carers are not always asked to sign the accident book, nor are given copies to hand on to parents. This poses a potential risk to children's health.

Leadership and management within the group is good. Staff plan the educational program in advance and meet regularly to share ideas on future activities. Focussed activities, with clear learning objectives, are provided daily and these are evaluated to ensure they are effective. However the evaluation of the overall provision does not collate the various assessments made to highlight any possible weaknesses. This results in some aspects of learning not being covered sufficiently and staff not always being deployed to maximise children's learning.

Overall, the pre-school meets the needs of the children who attend.

Improvements since the last inspection

Since the last inspection the staff have established a more rigorous procedure for recording the days and times that children and staff attend. This helps promote the safety of children.

Complaints since the last inspection

There are no complaints to report.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints records may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

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WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure all accident recordings are shared with parents or carers, and necessary written permissions are completed accurately.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure the evaluation procedure encompasses the overall educational provision, to maximise children's learning opportunities and to ensure the curriculum gives sufficient weight to all aspects of learning, especially in mathematics.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk