

Ducklings Limited

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	EY287576
Inspection date	11/02/2009
Inspector	Sarah Fletcher
Setting address	Emerson Valley Hall, Roeburn Crescent, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire, MK4 2DF
Telephone number	07963 604768
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Type of setting	Childcare - Non-Domestic

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

The provider must provide a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must provide a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Childcare (Inspection) Regulations 2008 regulations 9 and 10).

Description of the setting

Ducklings Pre-School is one of four pre-schools run by Ducklings Ltd. It opened in 2004 and operates from two rooms in a local community centre building. It is situated in a residential area of Emerson Valley, close to Milton Keynes and is in receipt of funding for the provision of free early education. The pre-school is registered on the Early Years Register to care for a maximum of 48 children to attend at any one time, on a sessional basis. The pre-school is open each weekday from 09:15 to 11:45 and from 12:00 to 14:30 during term time, with a lunch club available to families who require it. All children share access to a secure, enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 65 children in the early years age group on roll who come from the local and surrounding areas. The pre-school currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language. The pre-school employs seven staff. Of these, six staff, including the manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications, and one is working towards a qualification.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall, the quality of the provision is good. Children's welfare needs are consistently met successfully as staff take time to get to know children well, ensuring they all feel welcome in the friendly atmosphere and begin to understand clear pre-school routines. Children are mainly safeguarded and the pre-school staff show commitment to improving the quality of care and learning for all children, with encouraging levels of enthusiasm to continue the process. Children's preferences are monitored through an effective key person system, offering beneficial levels of support to help each child feel unique, regardless of their family background, race or gender. Children benefit from the successful two-way communication system working between staff and parents, providing good quality information and daily discussion, enabling the pre-school to promote outcomes for children effectively.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- further improve opportunities for all children to develop and practise their writing skills
- improve the range of resources and activities that will enable all children to understand their own cultures and to learn more about our wider world
- develop links with other providers of the Early Years Foundation Stage where children attend to ensure children receive the full framework
- develop an effective system of risk assessment on all areas children use to ensure they remain safe, both indoors and outside at all times

The leadership and management of the early years provision

The pre-school manager and her staff team support and promote inclusive practice well. Children benefit from their sound knowledge and understanding of safeguarding children procedures and an awareness of the value of recording any concerns. Information regarding children's accidents is shared with parents in confidence and staff record any incidents for future reference, such as when children occasionally bite each other. The pre-school mostly safeguards children effectively, using suitable recruitment and vetting procedures to ensure adults working with children are appropriate, with the majority of staff holding relevant childcare qualifications. Secure and effective entry systems are in place to prevent unvetted adults entering the premises without supervision, with all visitors signing in and out. The pre-school staff complete and record detailed daily checks on the premises and resources, however, risk assessments are not routinely carried out on all areas of the pre-school and outside spaces the children use to reduce potential hazards.

Parents and carers are happy with the quality of care given to their children and the information they receive about their child's individual learning and development. Communications with parents and carers enables pre-school staff to provide continuity of care and to ensure children's individual needs are well met. The pre-school provides a range of quality information for parents on bright informative notice boards and invites feedback through parental questionnaires. Policies and procedures contain clear details of pre-school practice and are shared appropriately with both parents and staff. Documentation for the safe and efficient management of the setting is in place to successfully promote outcomes for children. Regulatory records for individual children are well maintained and written permissions obtained from parents. The pre-school is beginning to use a system of self-evaluation to analyse practice and the manager finds this a useful tool for recognising and working towards areas of improvement.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Children's learning and development is supported with a wide range of age appropriate toys, resources and equipment available to help all children make progress towards the early learning goals. For example, children freely choose from a variety of puzzles and manipulative toys; a range of differently sized construction materials and various types of messy play, such as shaving foam or jelly. Children are beginning to use the bathroom independently and starting to show their awareness of simple hygiene routines, as staff encourage them to clean their hands before snacks and meals and after toileting or messy play to avoid cross infection. Staff follow clear guidance regarding children's sickness and have a sound knowledge of attending children's allergies. Children express their ideas through role play and use a range of simple equipment to explore the world around them. Staff offer high levels of interaction with children as they play or join in with structured activities and young children's developing language skills benefit from staff's use of open questioning.

Children enjoy opportunities to handle books independently and listen to stories in large and small groups. Staff provide some structured activities for children to begin to gain pencil control, however, children are not always given further encouragement to develop and practise their individual writing skills. Children benefit from both free play and structured activities in a planned and purposeful environment, indoors and outside. They learn about their own health and the natural world through appropriately themed activities, resources and discussions. However, the range of resources and activities that enable all children to understand their own cultures and to learn more about the wider world is currently limited. Staff plan and design structured activities to help individual children develop and progress their different skills. For example, children build 'cages' for the cuddly toy animals from large wooden building blocks and boxes, creating their own designs, with staff on hand for support and suggestions, if required.

The pre-school uses an effective key person system to provide support for individual children in both their care and learning needs. They take care to build sound relationships with each child and their family to promote continuity of care and develop an inclusive provision. The pre-school is beginning to deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage framework across the areas of learning and to ensure children have sufficient opportunities for learning and development as they progress towards the early learning goals. Staff proactively record and monitor children's progress through written observation and assessment, which is then collated into individual folders and shared with parents, along with written reports of achievements. Flexible planning and evaluation of structured activities helps staff assess progress and plan children's next steps for individual learning. Although the pre-school provides all children with the Early Years Foundation Stage successfully, staff have yet to establish links with other providers of the framework where pre-school children attend.

Annex A: record of inspection judgements

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

Overall effectiveness

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	3
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	2

Leadership and management

How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	3
How effective is the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement?	3
How well does the setting work in partnership with parents and others?	2
How well are children safeguarded?	3

Quality and standards

How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?	2
How well are children helped to stay safe?	2
How well are children helped to be healthy?	2
How well are children helped to enjoy and achieve?	3
How well are children helped to make a positive contribution?	2
How well are children helped develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	2

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