

Ducklings Pre-School

Wimborne Crescent, Westcroft, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire, MK4 4DB

Inspection date	08/07/2013
Previous inspection date	13/01/2009

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	
	Previous inspection:	
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		1
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		1
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		1

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision is outstanding

- The high quality of staff interactions helps all children to make very good progress in their learning and development.
- Children are capable of leading their own play. They demonstrate the characteristics of effective learning as they acquire the skills they need in readiness for school.
- Children have extensive opportunity to experience risk and challenge. They move equipment around and climb and jump from it as they test out what they can do.
- Children learn how to manage safety for themselves as they stop their bikes and scooters at the zebra crossing to allow others to cross when playing in the garden.
- Staff provide excellent ways for parents and grandparents to be involved in children's learning.
- Highly developed self-evaluation is extremely effective in identifying areas for improvement. Swift action to address these ensures that children experience high quality care.

Information about this inspection

Inspections of registered early years provision are:

- scheduled at least once in every inspection cycle – the current cycle ends on 31 July 2016
- scheduled more frequently where Ofsted identifies a need to do so, for example where provision was previously judged inadequate
- brought forward in the inspection cycle where Ofsted has received information that suggests the provision may not be meeting the legal requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage or where assessment of the provision identifies a need for early inspection
- prioritised where we have received information that the provision is not meeting the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and which suggests children may not be safe
- scheduled at the completion of an investigation into failure to comply with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Inspection activities

- The inspector conducted a joint observation with the manager.
- The inspector sought the views of parents and children.
- The inspector observed children engaged in learning activities in the garden and indoor areas.
- The inspector observed documentation, including self-evaluation, children's records and safeguarding documents.

Inspector

Hayley Marshall

Full Report

Information about the setting

Ducklings Pre-School is one of several pre-schools run by Ducklings Limited. It was originally registered in 1996 and re-registered under new management in 2002. It operates from the meeting place in Westcroft, in Milton Keynes. The pre-school is registered on the Early Years Register. Children have use of several rooms and an enclosed outside play area. The group is open during term time, Monday to Friday from 9.15am to 11.45am and from 12pm to 2.30pm, with an optional lunch club between sessions. There are currently caring for 73 children on roll aged between two to four years of age. The pre-school is in receipt of funding for the provision of free early education for children aged two, three and four years of age. The group supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who learn English as an additional language. Children attend from the local and surrounding areas on a sessional basis. The pre-school employs eight staff. The manager holds a relevant level 4 qualification in early years, six members of staff hold a relevant level 3 qualification and one member of staff has a relevant level 2 qualification.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- further develop children's independence and excellent self-help skills, for example, by allowing them to choose aprons during water play and by providing towels to dry themselves afterwards.

Inspection judgements

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend

Children's exceptionally good learning and development excels at the pre-school because of the high quality care staff provide. Their timely interactions help children to become skilful in managing their own play. The excellent balance of adult-led and child-led activities ensures that children experience challenge and make significant progress given their individual starting points. For example, when playing with water, staff encourage children to anticipate what they think might happen using mathematical language such as 'more' and 'less'. Children build upon their ideas and negotiate together to find ways of making a water wheel move more quickly. They stack bricks on top of each other and take great delight in showing staff when they succeed in making the water run through more quickly. These extremely good skills support children in readiness for their entry to school.

Children competently use tools, such as scissors and pencils. As a result, they can write

their names confidently on their work, and writing or making marks becomes part of their everyday play. Children have extensive opportunities to develop their large muscles. In the garden they use bikes, scooters, cars and slides as they develop their coordination and balance. Children dig in the earth with enthusiasm as they look for mini beasts. They observe tiny creatures and discuss their features. Staff support children's very good use of language by modelling new words to broaden their vocabulary. Staff extend children's critical thinking by asking them open questions, such as, 'why can't you go in the car?' as the seat is wet from rain water. This helps children to think and understand the world around them. Staff support children who speak English as an additional language by working closely with parents and finding out key words. This helps them to increase their understanding and use of English. Staff further value children's home language by displaying words and numerals in the pre-school. Positive images of diverse cultures help children to gain an awareness of the differences and similarities between themselves and others.

Staff encourage children's reading skills by labelling familiar resources helping children to make connections between objects and words. Children recognise letters and name them as they begin to acquire the phonic skills they need to begin to read successfully. All children begin to recognise their names as they find their name tag when registering, with parents support. The pre-school uses a wealth of ways to engage parents in their children's learning. They receive a summary of children's learning twice a year and attend parents' evenings. They learn about children's pre-school routines and activities during stay and play sessions and receive regular newsletters. Consequently, parents are very confident in discussing their children's progress with staff and staff highly value their observations and contributions. They include these in children's development profiles to gain accurate assessments of what children can do. Furthermore, parents are able to support children's learning at home as they share reading books together and know what their children need to learn next to help them to progress. The pre-school communicates with other settings who provide care for children by using a communication book and sharing their planning. This means they are able to fully complement children's learning. As a result of these highly established partnerships, children make brilliant progress in their learning and development.

The extensive and highly accurate tracking and assessments staff undertake mean that they recognise when children need extra support. They take swift action to ensure that children receive the help they need. Individual education plans focus upon realistic targets and careful monitoring of these help children to progress rapidly and reach their full potential.

The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children

Children are extremely confident in the pre-school. They demonstrate their secure attachment to staff by seeking them out to join in with their play. This enables children to investigate their environment and take adults along with them as they learn and explore. Staff show genuine affection for children. They talk to them in ways that helps them to feel good about themselves and identify their achievements. The warm praise staff offer

children promotes their sense of security and raises their self-esteem.

Staff are meticulous about ensuring that children play and learn in environment that is clean and promotes their good health. They invite local health visitors to the pre-school to explain to children about the benefits of hand washing and use measures, such as hand gels and antibacterial soaps, to help children to reduce the risk of the spread of infection. Staff enlist the services of outside companies to further maintain the garden areas for children's safe use.

Children demonstrate an impressive ability to manage risks for themselves. This is because staff are highly skilled at supervising children to maximise their confidence and understanding. For example, children move large equipment around the garden as they construct and develop ideas about what they want to do. They balance and stand at the top of the low level slide, looking at the staff before they leap off on to the floor. Staff observe children at a safe distance, congratulating their efforts and asking if they would like extra help at times. Children know they are safe as they reach out towards staff when they want extra help when jumping. Children know about the dangers of playing outside in the hot sun. They find a hat to wear and tell staff when they need to apply sun cream. Therefore, children are highly independent in meeting their own needs. Children further demonstrate their independence through their well-developed self-care skills. For example, children can sometimes choose to wear aprons when playing in water and dry their hands with towels afterwards helping them to feel comfortable, although on occasions these resources are not fully available.

Staff support children's understanding about road safety and how to move around safely in the garden area when riding bikes and scooters. Staff provide a zebra crossing for children to use. They know that this is a safe place where they can move from one side of the garden to the other. This is because children are taught to stop their bikes and scooters when they get to this point.

Children are exceptionally well prepared for their move onto school. This is because the manager takes every opportunity possible to build secure links with local schools. Staff welcome teachers into the pre-school to meet children and attend local schools on visits in the lead up to the end of term. Staff make visits to local schools to ensure they share detailed information about children who need extra support. Consequently, all children experience a smooth journey from the pre-school into school. The pre-school works very closely with other providers who care for children. They share information through a communication book to make sure that children experience continuity in their learning and development.

The environment where children play is highly stimulating. Children sometimes choose to play in a physical way as they explore their interest in play fighting. Staff understand that children enjoy playing in this way and guide their play to ensure that this interest does not cause harm. For example, they steer children's fascination with weapon making into talking about the features of the weapon and talk about what it might do. Children competently explain why they should not engage in fighting and the effect it has upon others. Staff empower children to vocalise how they feel and have the confidence to say how they want to play and when they do not want to play. Therefore, children understand

rules and their rights extremely well and can assert them.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision

Staff are fully aware of their responsibilities to keep children safe in their care. Each member of staff can explain how to implement the safeguarding policies and regular training helps them to refresh their superb knowledge and skills. Thorough and well-tuned induction helps to check that all those who work with children are suitable to do so. Staff maintain safe and legal ratios at all times and contingency plans ensure that there is always available staff in the event of staff absence. Staff are vigilant in checking on children throughout the session and deal immediately with any incidents or accidents that become apparent. The qualified first aiders give treatment to children who require it and inform parents upon collection of their children. Secure recording systems help staff to reflect upon any trends or patterns in accidents or incidents. These are fed into self-evaluation to monitor any repetitive areas where accidents occur to take steps to secure these areas.

Self-evaluation is highly robust and sets challenging targets for improvement. The staff team share the ambition to improve the quality of care they provide for children and aspire to excellence. The manager uses self-evaluation as a working document. She records children, parents and staff views and continually trials new ideas and approaches to strengthen weaker areas. The pre-school takes swift action when areas for improvement are apparent and places a sharp focus upon plans for improvement. Recommendations from the previous inspection have been fully addressed. This demonstrates that the pre-school has an excellent capacity to sustain ongoing improvements for the benefit of children.

The pre-school uses innovative ways to engage families. Children bring their 'significant male' into the pre-school for a stay and play session. This helps dads, granddads and uncles to learn about what children do at pre-school and in turn, they share their knowledge and skills with the children and staff. Staff appreciate the value of this activity in helping children to gain a sense of identity and for families to feel special. Parents access the pre-school website to find out about important events and share their ideas and feelings readily. Parents say that the pre-school has a family feel to it because it is 'warm and friendly'.

The manager conducts high quality supervision of staff. She uses regular meetings and appraisals to identify staff training needs. The staff team is stable and long established. They intuitively work together as each knows their individual role and shares the vision of the manager. The manager in turn works closely with other managers within the company. Together they review the quality and effectiveness of each aspect the pre-school. This very supportive nature of working helps the pre-school to further develop practice as they share ideas. Staff develop ways of observing and assessing children to ensure that they quickly identify children's individual needs, including when extra support is needed. Staff work closely with external agencies and local authority development

workers to access extra help for children. This means that all children make rapid progress in their learning and development at the pre-school. The progress check at age two for children is very well-informed through the extensive observations staff undertake. Furthermore, close working with parents to gain information about children's achievements at home ensures that these give highly accurate accounts of children's learning and progress to date.

What inspection judgements mean

Registered early years provision

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	Outstanding provision is highly effective in meeting the needs of all children exceptionally well. This ensures that children are very well prepared for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 2	Good	Good provision is effective in delivering provision that meets the needs of all children well. This ensures children are ready for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	Satisfactory provision is performing less well than expectations in one or more of the key areas. It requires improvement in order to be good.
Grade 4	Inadequate	Provision that is inadequate requires significant improvement and/or enforcement action. The provision is failing to give children an acceptable standard of early years education and/or is not meeting the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be inspected again within 12 months of the date of this inspection.
Met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider continues to meet the requirements for registration.
Not met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider does not meet the requirements for registration.

Inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted 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.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY285200
Local authority	Milton Keynes
Inspection number	924189
Type of provision	Sessional provision
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	2 - 5
Total number of places	40
Number of children on roll	73
Name of provider	Ducklings Limited
Date of previous inspection	13/01/2009
Telephone number	01908 520563

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance '*Complaints procedure: raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted*', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

Type of provision

For the purposes of this inspection the following definitions apply:

Full-time provision is that which operates for more than three hours. These are usually known as nurseries, nursery schools and pre-schools and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the higher fee for registration.

Sessional provision operates for more than two hours but does not exceed three hours in any one day. These are usually known as pre-schools, kindergartens or nursery schools

and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the lower fee for registration.

Childminders care for one or more children where individual children attend for a period of more than two hours in any one day. They operate from domestic premises, which are usually the childminder's own home. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Out of school provision may be sessional or full-time provision and is delivered before or after school and/or in the summer holidays. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. Where children receive their Early Years Foundation Stage in school these providers do not have to deliver the learning and development requirements in full but should complement the experiences children receive in school.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2012

