

Downside Pre-School

Oakwood Avenue, Dunstable, Bedfordshire LU5 4AS



Inspection date	11 June 2019
Previous inspection date	27 April 2016

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	Good	2
	Previous inspection:	Good	2
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 works very effectively with the management committee. Together they have a clear vision of how to provide interesting and developmental experiences for children. For example, they recently arranged for a member of staff to receive specialist training to lead outdoor learning in the forest area.
- The management team works very closely with the on-site children's centre and feeder school, and with outside agencies. Children and families who need specialist advice and support get appropriate and timely help. This helps to provide children with the best possible continuity of care.
- Staff enhance the strong teaching skills through training, networking and research. In line with recent training, staff expertly teach young children to listen attentively and take turns in conversation. Staff know when to repeat or extend what children say. All children, including reluctant speakers, show increasing confidence in speaking.
- Staff are very patient and caring with children and form good relationships with them. Children's behaviour is good. They follow staff's example and learn to be tolerant and co-operative with each other.
- Children experience a wide variety of activities to help physical development. For example, young children enjoy weaving in and out as they move to music. Staff add a further challenge by getting children to safely swirl ribbons in the air. Children learn to take safe risks and assess levels of safety for themselves.
- Each child has a key person who regularly checks the child's progress and uses the information gained to inform planning and fill gaps in children's learning. All children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language, make good progress from their starting points. Even so, there is scope to make the already successful assessment of progress more precise.
- The manager robustly evaluates all aspects of the pre-school's activity. She recently reviewed and improved the use of floor space indoors. As a result, children now have access to well-organised and resourced reading and role-play areas. However, there is still scope to enhance learning opportunities in the outdoor learning spaces.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- focus more sharply on assessment of children's learning and development to help children make the best possible progress
- build on the opportunities to further enhance the outdoor learning open space.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed activities in the indoor play areas and the outdoor learning environment. She carried out a joint observation with the manager.
- The inspector held meetings with the management. She spoke with staff and children throughout the inspection when appropriate.
- The inspector looked at a range of documentation, including the pre-school's risk assessment and safety records.
- The inspector checked evidence of the suitability and qualifications of the staff. She looked at the pre-school's self-evaluation.
- The inspector spoke with parents during the inspection and took account of their views.

Inspector

Liz Kissane

Inspection findings

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

Arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The manager is a safeguarding trainer. She ensures all staff know and understand their responsibilities in relation to child protection issues. All staff know how to report any concerns to relevant professionals. The manager vets staff closely for suitability to work with children and provides a thorough induction. She regularly carries out detailed supervisions and ensures that each member of staff knows how to improve their practice. Staff have been trained to carry out observations of each others' practice. They say this helps them to reflect more deeply on their own teaching skills. Staff work very positively with parents to meet children's learning and care needs. They establish children's abilities and development needs with parents when children first join. Parents say their children are very happy at the pre-school and are well prepared for school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

Children respond readily to a welcoming, well-organised and stimulating environment. Staff plan different practical and creative activities for children's all-round development. For example, in the role-play area, children learn about going to the dentist. Staff talk with children about how to brush their teeth properly and encourage them to follow instruction cards. Older children practise cleaning their teeth correctly after snack time. Children talk about what will happen if they do not clean their teeth properly. Children are eager to choose from the wide variety of activities. For example, they explore different types of dry pasta. Children pick up the pasta pieces with pincers and tongs. They count and order the pasta by shape and size. Children access a variety of good-quality resources designed to help them make patterns and marks on paper. Staff adjust their teaching well to meet each child's needs throughout all activities.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare are good

Children have a wealth of opportunities for fresh air and exercise in the outdoor area. Some enthusiastically extend their physical skills, such as balancing and climbing, on the large play equipment. Others learn to use scooters. Children learn to dress for different activities in all seasons. They explore forest spaces where they begin to name wild plants and identify the ones they should avoid. Children investigate in the mud kitchen where they access a range of tools and materials. Staff supervise children well as they handle and control eating utensils. They support children to prepare healthy snacks safely. Children learn to look after themselves, each other and their environment.

Outcomes for children are good

Children develop literacy skills. They handle books well and enjoy sharing stories. They learn to form letters correctly and to write their names. Children acquire mathematical skills during practical activities. For example, they count, add and subtract different objects. Children become confident learners, well prepared for school.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY363763
Local authority	Central Bedfordshire
Inspection number	10074019
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Day care type	Sessional day care
Age range of children	2 - 4
Total number of places	44
Number of children on roll	51
Name of registered person	Downside Pre-School Committee
Registered person unique reference number	RP904833
Date of previous inspection	27 April 2016
Telephone number	01582 660833

Downside Pre-School registered in 2008. It is located in Dunstable, Bedfordshire. The pre-school employs eight members of childcare staff. All staff hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 2 or above, including the manager, who has early years professional status. The pre-school opens from Monday to Friday during term time only. Sessions are from 8.45am until 11.45am and from 12.15pm until 3.15pm or all day, from 8.45am until 3.15pm. The pre-school provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

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