

Inspection of Dalton Pre-School Nursery

Block 104, Dalton Barracks, Abingdon, Oxfordshire OX13 6JB

Inspection date: 17 September 2021

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good
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What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children settle well. They enjoy their time at nursery and have fun. Children form positive relationships with staff and each other. In particular, babies quickly form close bonds with their key person, which helps them to settle easily. Children's individual needs are known securely by staff. Their backgrounds are valued. For example, children listen to songs in different home languages. Babies enjoy exploring a range of different experiences, including sensory materials, such as paint and leaves they have collected. Children and babies develop their confidence well. For example, they learn to take risks when using larger equipment while closely supervised by staff. Children develop good language skills. They regularly hear words and repetitive phrases, such as through rhymes and singing songs.

Children follow the behaviour expectations well. For example, pre-school children happily share resources with their friends. Children develop awareness of taking care of themselves and the environment. This includes toddlers helping to tidy up and independently washing their hands before eating.

There is a clear curriculum to support children's learning and they make good progress over time. Children participate in their learning well and staff join in their play with enthusiasm. Overall, staff implement the curriculum securely. However, on occasion, most-able children do not receive sufficient challenge from staff to help extend their learning even further. Children who need extra help in their learning receive appropriate support. For example, staff use picture cards to help promote communication with them.

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

- Partnerships with parents are good. Staff work with parents well to exchange information about children's needs. For example, parents of younger children receive individual written feedback alongside discussions. Parents comment positively about their children's time at the nursery, including how well children have settled in when they first started.
- Staff gather a good range of information about children's needs, including their development on entry. This helps them to identify what children need to learn. Staff are quick to respond to any concerns about children's development. They work with parents and gain advice from other professionals to help them support children's individual learning needs. Additional funding is used well, including providing staff to give one-to-one support to children to help them progress in their development.
- Overall, children's learning is supported well through staff interactions, play and activities. However, there are times, where some staff do not fully challenge and extend children's learning. This means that some children, particularly most-able

children are sometimes not challenged enough in their learning.

- Staff provide a good role model to children. This helps children to follow the example set. Children receive praise and encouragement from staff, which promotes their self-esteem and confidence.
- Children are encouraged to be healthy. They make choices from healthy snacks provided by the nursery. Parents provide a packed lunch for their children. They receive advice and guidance about what types of food to provide to help encourage healthy choices.
- All children, including the babies, have frequent access to the outdoors, including access to individual garden areas for each room. Staff take children out on local walks. This helps children learn about the world around them, including understanding the different jobs their families and other people do. Children take part in activities indoors and outside that encourages them to be energetic and active. This includes the use of equipment that supports the development of their muscles and physical skills. For example, climbing and balancing equipment. In addition, children develop control and coordination using their hands, such as when using tools with paint, sand or water.
- Staff receive regular supervision meetings and training to help support their professional development. They say they feel supported well and that they can approach the managers for help and advice when needed. However, due to the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic, managers have not been able to effectively monitor staff's practice in some rooms until more recently. There are occasional gaps in staff implementing the curriculum as successfully as possible. As a result, some staff do not fully challenge children's learning to help build further on their skills and knowledge.
- There have been some positive improvements to the management of the nursery. This includes more involvement from committee members who have started to monitor the quality of the provision more closely. This has helped strengthen procedures, such as those that help keep children safe.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff and managers have a secure understanding of their responsibilities to safeguard children. They know how to identify and manage concerns about children or other staff. This includes reporting any concerns to relevant agencies. Staff demonstrate a good awareness of wider safeguarding issues, such as radicalisation. They complete risk assessments daily, such as checking the environment and large play equipment children use. Staff are deployed well to supervise children closely. The committee has recently become more involved in the staff recruitment and suitability process. This has improved the robustness of checking staff's suitability to work with children.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- monitor staff's practice more precisely, to ensure the curriculum is implemented as effectively as possible, to build on children's knowledge and skills even further
- support staff to recognise the needs of most-able children and ensure sufficient challenge is offered to them, to help extend their learning further.

Setting details

Unique reference number	134534
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	10202663
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	0 to 4
Total number of places	60
Number of children on roll	49
Name of registered person	Dalton Pre-School Nursery Committee
Registered person unique reference number	RP518034
Telephone number	01235 543640
Date of previous inspection	8 November 2016

Information about this early years setting

Dalton Pre-School Nursery registered in 1993. It operates from premises located at Dalton Barracks, close to the town of Abingdon, Oxfordshire. It is open Monday to Thursday from 7.45am to 5.15pm and on Friday from 7.45am to 3pm during term time only. A play scheme is offered during some school holidays for children aged up to eight years. The play scheme is not operated during the Christmas holidays and for three weeks of the summer holidays. The nursery is in receipt of funding for the provision of free early education for children aged two, three and four years. The nursery employs 18 staff to work with the children. The manager holds a level 3 qualification and 13 other staff hold recognised early years qualifications at either level 2 or 3.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Sheena Bankier

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the setting received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the setting and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the setting.
- The manager and deputy manager took the inspector on a learning walk of the nursery and explained the curriculum intentions.
- The inspector gained some parents' views through speaking to some parents in person and by telephone.
- The manager observed an activity with the inspector and afterwards evaluated the quality of this together.
- Children interacted with the inspector and older children talked to her about their play and activities.

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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