

Inspection of Ducklings

Emerson Valley Hall, Roeburn Crescent, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire MK4 2DF

Inspection date: 22 November 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 follow a curriculum that promotes their good attitudes and dispositions towards learning. Staff have high ambitions for what children can do and they successfully build on what children already know. As a result, children make good progress relevant to their age and stage of development. Children explore a wide range of activities and decide where and how they want to learn. For example, children play in the garden when they choose and ask staff for resources they enjoy playing with. Older children are articulate and fluent in their speech. They speak with such confidence that their words come out in a hurry as they are so eager to share their ideas. Staff manage this well, listening and drawing other children into the lively conversations. Children display high levels of confidence and self-esteem. Staff greet children as they arrive, and children run into the pre-school happily. Staff offer continual reassurance and genuine affection as children learn to separate from their parents for the first time.

Children's behaviour is consistently good. They follow direction and even the youngest children know the familiar daily routine. This helps children to feel safe and secure as they know what to expect during the day. When children are tired, staff provide a cosy and safe place for them to sleep.

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

- The provider empowers the manager to develop a curriculum that supports children and reflects the manager's depth of understanding of child development. The manager is highly knowledgeable and uses her good understanding to review and adapt the curriculum. As a result, the curriculum is finely tuned and identifies what children need to learn to help to prepare them for their successful future learning.
- Staff skilfully build on children's communication and language skills. They know how to sequence their teaching, initially responding to children's eye contact and body language when they are non-verbal. As children grow, staff respond to their babbling because they understand that this is a vital part of early speech development. Eventually, children become expert communicators.
- Staff quickly identify when children need extra support with their learning. Their swift intervention means that children with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive teaching that meets their individual needs. Staff recognise the small steps in progress that children make and celebrate their achievements with parents.
- On occasion, some of the role-play areas where children play using their imagination are not highly enticing. Staff do not always provide children with opportunities to expand on their imaginative ideas and take their learning forward. As a result, children talk about their ideas, such as feeding and dressing

their babies, but cannot fully put these ideas into action.

- Young children show tenacity and a good ability to do things for themselves. At mealtimes, children organise themselves and eat their food independently with staff encouragement. Staff sit with children and talk about healthy eating.
- The key-person relationships are highly effective and promote children's high self-esteem and confidence. Staff expertly step into the role of buddy key person and demonstrate a depth of knowledge of children. This enables them to seamlessly provide continuity for children. Consequently, children are confident and happy at the pre-school.
- Staff gather basic information about children and their backgrounds. However, they do not initially ask parents about more specific information about children's home lives and experiences. Therefore, staff do not support children's learning about what makes them unique from the very start.
- There is a strong sense of leadership at the pre-school. The area manager has an excellent oversight of the pre-school through carrying out extensive evaluations of all aspects of the provision. The manager is ambitious in extending her knowledge and skills. She uses this good knowledge to motivate the staff team. Relationships with parents are strong. Parents know that their children settle well and they receive regular updates about their children's progress.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Safeguarding children is given the highest priority. Staff are acutely aware of how incidents within the local community affect families' sense of safety, security and well-being. Staff are clear about their roles in protecting children. They recognise the signs and symptoms that might indicate children are at risk of harm. The management team works closely with the local safeguarding children partnership to share any concerns about children's welfare. The provider operates safe recruitment procedures to help to ensure that those who work with children at the pre-school are suitable to do so. The manager organises staff deployment to ensure that children are always supervised safely.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- expand on imaginative and role-play areas to further excite and entice children to build on their play and extend their ideas
- gather more information from parents about children's home lives and experiences to build on children's learning about differences and similarities from the very start.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY287576
Local authority	Milton Keynes
Inspection number	10213516
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 at time of inspection	1 to 4
Total number of places	48
Number of children on roll	44
Name of registered person	Ducklings Limited
Registered person unique reference number	RP910109
Telephone number	07594 423163
Date of previous inspection	30 January 2018

Information about this early years setting

Ducklings registered in 2004. The pre-school employs seven members of childcare staff. Of these, one holds an appropriate early years qualification at level 4 and four staff hold qualifications at level 3. The pre-school opens from Monday to Friday, during term time only. Sessions are from 9am until midday and from midday until 3pm. The pre-school provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Hayley Marshall-Gowen

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the provider received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the provider and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the provider.
- The inspector observed the quality of teaching during activities indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact this has on children's learning.
- A joint observation was completed and discussed with the manager.
- During the inspection, the inspector held a meeting with the manager and the provider. She looked at relevant documentation, such as evidence of the suitability of staff working in the pre-school.
- The inspector spoke with staff and children at suitable times throughout the inspection.
- Parents were invited to share their views with the inspector. Several parents discussed their views during the inspection and the inspector took account of all feedback received.

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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