

Inspection of Muddy Monkeys

The Downwood, The Downwood Vineyard, Wimborne Road, Blandford Forum,
Dorset DT11 9HN

Inspection date: 6 July 2022

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
The quality of education	Outstanding
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not applicable

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is outstanding

Children flourish in this exceptional woodland setting. They arrive with anticipation, knowing that there will be lots of exciting things to do in the forest. Children form close bonds with staff, who cheerfully welcome them in the morning. As the day begins, children walk around the woods with their key person, talk about what is new in the forest today and what they need to do to keep safe. Children recall detailed knowledge about the natural environment. Throughout the day, they practise reading signs, books and discussing with staff different trees and plants.

All children, including children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), are confident to talk and make their own choices. Children become deeply involved in their activities. Staff encourage children to challenge themselves and develop their resilience to have a go. Children confidently use tools to cut and drill wood. They use their newly found skills to create gifts for others. They know how to keep themselves safe and staff closely monitor the safety of their play. Children successfully collaborate together, they create a giant course for wooden balls to travel down the hillside using guttering and tubing. Their behaviour is exemplary as they follow the routines of the day. They take turns and wait patiently for their turn to wash their hands and share healthy snacks with one another.

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

- Leaders are inspirational. They are ambitious to enhance the development of every child that attends the setting. In all the decisions that they make, they focus on children's development and their welfare. They create a culture that successfully promotes these high expectations to staff. They continually monitor, evaluate and reflect with staff, encouraging and noticing good practice and suggesting ways to enhance children's learning. Leaders have defined clear roles and responsibilities for every member of the setting. This clarity means that all staff have ownership, passion and focus to continually improve the provision for children.
- The learning environment is exceptional. Staff carefully consider children's learning needs and design activities that broaden and improve children's learning. Staff respond to the individual needs of children, including children with SEND, providing a sequence of learning for each child to ensure all children are successful at learning new skills and acquiring new knowledge. Children's physical development is exemplary. They challenge themselves by climbing, making ramps and balancing across beams. They develop fine motor control, enjoying a wide range of interesting and inventive resources, such as lemon scented sensory play dough.
- Staff are excited to introduce new vocabulary to children. They initiate friendly conversations with children and model new words for children to use in their

play. Children learn to speak French with a specialist teacher. Staff skilfully draw children's attention to the sounds within words, which helps prepare them for future reading skills. High-quality books are provided throughout the woods, which children regularly enjoy reading with staff. Children love to dress up and have fun retelling stories that they know well.

- Staff subtly extend children's thinking by starting questions with the phrase 'I wonder how...?' Children respond by giving their own ideas and are encouraged to try these out. For example, 'I'm going to mix water with this dirt to make mud in my shiny bucket.'
- Children use an exceptional range of mathematical language throughout the setting. Children count, make comparisons of sizes and describe shapes that they see. They share number games that they have learned with their parents, so they can carry on playing them at home.
- Parents speak highly of the setting. They value the excellent partnership they have with staff. Staff take time to regularly speak with them about their child's development. They provide professional, attentive and informative support. Parents say that they 'adore' the setting and describe the positive impact staff have on children's development as 'powerful'.
- Children are provided with healthy, fresh food. Children are gently encouraged to try new foods and enjoy naturally flavoured water with cucumber slices as an alternative to sugary drinks. Children learn about the effects of different types of food on their bodies.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and staff have an excellent knowledge of how to keep children safe. All staff receive regular training and leaders provide ongoing support to embed what they have learned. They know how to identify potential signs and symptoms of abuse and how to report these. Staff know what to do in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff. Staff have detailed knowledge of the setting's procedures for the use of digital devices. Safer recruitment procedures are followed to make sure that suitable staff are working with children. Staff are vigilant and knowledgeable about potential risks in this outdoor provision and follow their procedures to maintain a safe environment.

Setting details

Unique reference number	2556170
Local authority	Dorset
Inspection number	10221638
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	2 to 10
Total number of places	30
Number of children on roll	47
Name of registered person	Muddy Monkeys Limited
Registered person unique reference number	2556169
Telephone number	07544403278
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

Muddy Monkeys is a privately owned forest school that registered in 2019. They operate from the outskirts of Blandford Forum in Dorset. The setting is open each weekday from 7.45am to 5pm. The two co-owners work as joint managers, and both have a level 4 and level 5 advanced practitioner in early years qualification. They employ six members of staff, five of whom have a level 3 early years qualification or above.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Jonathan Payne

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 and leaders completed a learning walk together in all areas of the setting and discussed the early years curriculum.
- The special educational needs coordinator spoke to the inspector about how they support children with SEND.
- The inspection talked to staff and parents at appropriate times throughout the inspections and took their views into account.
- The inspector observed the interactions between children and staff.

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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