

Inspection of Lowson Street Pre-School

Harrowgate Hill Methodist Church, Lowson Street, DARLINGTON, County Durham
DL3 0EY

Inspection date: 22 November 2022

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

Staff have a wonderful rapport with children at this very friendly and welcoming setting. Children are happy, settled and secure. They form close bonds with staff, who are very caring, respectful and kind. Settling-in sessions for new children and parents are flexible to meet individual needs and new children settle quickly. Children learn to share as they explore with dough and oats as part of an activity. They take turns as they play with jigsaws, trains and small-world figures. Staff explain gently to children the reasons for unwanted behaviour and the impact of their actions. They encourage children to play well together and be kind to their friends.

Children learn how to care for living things through exciting activities, such as hatching duck eggs and planting runner beans to take home to grow. Staff are very positive and encouraging. They are clear with their praise so that children can easily recognise and be proud of their achievements. This helps to raise children's confidence and self-esteem. Children register themselves into the setting. This helps them to feel a sense of ownership and belonging. Children grow in their independence. Staff support them to hang up their coats, wash their hands and choose what they want to play with next.

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

- Children benefit from a wide range of stimulating and challenging activities. They make shadows with torches and plant herbs and sunflowers. Children explore the texture of paint in large trays with sweeping and scrubbing brushes. Staff identify where children are in their development effectively. They know children's interests and how to support their future learning.
- Overall, staff provide strong support for children's developing vocabularies. Children enjoy lovely conversations with staff about their home lives and own experiences. However, staff do not consistently leave more time for children to respond to more detailed questions, to extend their language further.
- Staff plan good support for children to develop physically. Children strengthen their hands and fingers, such as through gluing, rolling dough and using scissors. They balance on obstacle courses made from planks and crates. Children jump on space hoppers and learn to weave wheelbarrows around the enclosed garden.
- Children enjoy singing and stories. They benefit from taking part in small-group activities to help to develop their speech and language. However, staff do not consistently consider how they can reduce distractions at the beginning of sessions, in order to settle children and support them to listen.
- The manager uses additional funding received by the setting to buy outdoor resources to support children's physical skills. For example, staff have purchased

ladders to help children to develop their core strength and coordination.

- Children are curious and enthusiastic to learn. They learn about the wider world outside the setting, such as through nature walks, sports days and trips to a local farm.
- Well-established routines at snack time help children to become increasingly independent. Children find their name, fetch their plates and wash their hands. Staff support children to choose from a range of healthy snacks and pour their drinks. Children scrape their plates and help to tidy away.
- Parents speak very highly of the setting. They say how caring and friendly staff are and praise the strong progress that their children make. Parents of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities describe the positive impact that staff have made to their children's lives.
- Relationships with local schools and settings are well established. There are robust arrangements in place to share relevant information. This helps to create a consistent approach to support children's learning and development.
- The manager gathers the views of others to help to plan improvements. She reflects well on experiences for children, staff and parents. For example, the manager asks staff their views about support for their well-being. She asks staff how useful they find the one-to-one meetings that she plans.
- The professional and experienced staff work very well together as a team. The dedicated and hard-working manager is very supportive of her staff. She encourages staff to develop their practice and keep their skills up to date. The manager and staff are passionate about the care they provide.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The manager has a thorough understanding of her role and responsibilities to keep children safe. This includes a range of safeguarding aspects. All staff hold certificates in first aid, safeguarding and food hygiene. Staff support children to assess their own risks. For example, they encourage children to assess whether the wooden planks they want to balance on are dry enough to use safely. The manager and staff know what might concern them about a child in terms of safeguarding. They know who to contact and the processes to take to help to keep children safe.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- provide more time for children to respond to more detailed questions, to develop their language further
- reduce distractions at the beginning of small-group sessions, in order to settle children and support them to listen.

Setting details

Unique reference number	508117
Local authority	Darlington
Inspection number	10229450
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register
Day care type	Sessional day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	2 to 4
Total number of places	26
Number of children on roll	29
Name of registered person	Lowson Street Pre-School Committee
Registered person unique reference number	RP909001
Telephone number	01325 362388
Date of previous inspection	23 November 2016

Information about this early years setting

Lowson Street Pre-School registered in 1999 and is located in Darlington. The setting employs five members of childcare staff, including the manager. All staff hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 and above. The manager has an early years degree and holds early years professional status. The setting opens during term time, from 9am to 3.30pm, Monday to Thursday, and from 9am to midday on Friday. It provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Julie Foers

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 manager discussed with the inspector how the setting organises and plans the curriculum and experiences for children. The inspector viewed the inside and outside space used by the setting.
- The inspector observed the quality of education during activities and assessed the impact on children's learning. The manager and the inspector evaluated an activity together.
- The inspector looked at a sample of the setting's documents. This included evidence of training and the suitability of staff.
- The inspector held discussions with the manager and staff. She spoke to parents to gather their views on the setting and took into account the written views of others.

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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