

Inspection of Old Macdonald's Day Nursery

Darley Ash Farm, Chipperfield Road, Bovingdon, Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire
HP3 0JW

Inspection date: 10 January 2023

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
The quality of education	Outstanding
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is outstanding

Children are enthusiastic and excited to begin their day in this incredibly stimulating nursery. Babies beam at their familiar adults as they explore leaves that they have collected from the farm. Toddlers proudly talk to adults about their visits to the hairdressers. They are excitable as they use scissors to cut up spaghetti, pretending that it is hair. Staff are quick to extend activities for children to broaden their experiences. Children are happy and resilient. They smile as they try hard to push themselves forward on bicycles in the garden. Staff use encouragement and modelling to motivate children to be determined and confident at what they do.

The skilled staff have the highest expectations of all children. They rapidly identify those who may need additional support and ensure that this is quickly put in place, both in the nursery and in partnership with families at home. Children make dramatic progress from their starting points, quickly developing their communication skills and extending their vocabulary. For example, pre-school children enthuse about receiving a postcard from 'Paddington Bear' from Madagascar and explain to the inspector that it is in Africa. Children are motivated to learn new things, ask questions and share their own ideas with each other.

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

- Children have a breadth of opportunities to explore in the outdoor environment. In the garden, younger children splash in muddy puddles and collect mud in different pots and pans. Babies go to the farm to collect leaves and look at the animals. Staff extend this activity in the nursery, using toy animals, sounding out the names of them and singing 'Old MacDonald'.
- Staff teach mathematics exceptionally well. Babies sing number rhymes and staff model and represent numbers using their fingers. Toddlers delight as they talk about different sized vegetables on their plates while identifying numerals on a display board. Pre-school children delight in talking about positional language and how children are 'behind' and 'diagonal' from them.
- Children have outstanding opportunities to develop their language skills across the curriculum. Staff consistently introduce new language through very high-quality teaching and spontaneous interactions with children, which take place across the setting. For example, children look at a book about animals and learn that squids have three hearts. Children make remarkably fast progress to become confident talkers.
- The management team have developed well-being initiatives which have boosted the morale and confidence of the staff team. Staff, in turn, prioritise children's sense of well-being. For example, when children have new events going on in their lives, such as preparing for new siblings, staff create experiences so children can learn about babies and how to care for them. Staff

arrange home visits to offer support for children and families as well as having an 'open door policy' at the nursery. Children receive daily encouragement to express their feelings and staff support them to learn how to manage these appropriately. As a result, children can regulate their emotions exceptionally well.

- The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) and deputy SENCo ensure that staff receive robust and tailored training on how best to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. As a result, all children make the best progress possible. Children with speech and language difficulties are quickly identified. Staff work exceptionally well with parents to ensure that children make rapid progress at home as well as at the nursery. Parents are truly valued in all decision-making and comment on the effectiveness of their partnerships with the nursery. Staff are keen to celebrate children's achievements with parents through regular meetings.
- The management team are very enthusiastic about their well-designed curriculum and support and coach all staff in their vision. Staff know children exceptionally well and meet weekly together to discuss what each child needs to work on next. This enables them to carefully tailor activities and learning opportunities to help children make the best possible individual progress.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding throughout the nursery. Staff are extremely confident and vigilant in recognising the possible signs that a child may be at risk of harm. The manager ensures that safeguarding features prominently in team meetings. She offers in-house training to new staff and to existing staff to refresh their current knowledge. Staff are vigilant about children's safety and skilled at enabling them to learn to assess risks for themselves. They use a 'sticky hands' technique, where children place their hands on the wall when coming in from outside, so staff can account for them all. Staff regularly carry out headcounts on children and communicate regularly with each other to ensure the safety of all children.

Setting details

Unique reference number	129381
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10265380
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	0 to 4
Total number of places	74
Number of children on roll	133
Name of registered person	Old Macdonald's Day Nursery Ltd
Registered person unique reference number	RP523462
Telephone number	01442 834118
Date of previous inspection	5 June 2017

Information about this early years setting

Old MacDonald's Day Nursery registered in 1998 and is located in Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire. The nursery employs 34 members of childcare staff. Of these, 25 hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 2 and above, including one who holds early years professional status. The nursery opens from 7.30am until 7pm, Monday to Friday, all year round. It provides funded early education for three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Amy Clarkson

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 nursery manager joined the inspector on a learning walk and talked to the inspector about their curriculum and what they want children to learn.
- The inspector observed the quality of education being provided, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact that this was having on children's learning.
- The inspector talked to staff at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their views.
- A joint observation was carried out with the nursery manager and the inspector.
- The inspector had a discussion with the SENCo regarding early intervention and support for children.
- The nursery manager showed the inspector documentation to demonstrate the suitability of staff.
- The inspector spoke with the manager and the acting deputy about the leadership and management of the setting.

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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