

# Inspection of Duchess Nursery Abingdon

31 Northcourt Road, Abingdon OX14 1PJ

---

Inspection date: 13 March 2023

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not applicable

## **What is it like to attend this early years setting?**

### **The provision is good**

Children are happy and show that they feel safe and secure. Children in the baby room show excitement to explore. For example, they reach to pop bubbles or hide in large cardboard boxes, laughing with their peers. Due to the exciting garden refurbishment, children delight in exploring nature and their local community when they go on regular walks. Children form secure relationships with staff, giving a sense of joy and happiness for everyone at this nursery. Older children have lovely conversations with staff. Children like to talk about what they know and can do. Younger children enjoy cuddles with staff who sing familiar songs to them to support their communication. As staff sing, the children's faces light up with excitement and they sway to the musical sounds they can hear.

Children are focussed and engaged in carefully planned activities built around their interests and the next stages of their learning. They develop their fine motor skills as they make marks on chalk boards, paper and easels. Older children demonstrate more concentration and control as they draw meaningful patterns or objects. Children are kind and caring towards one another because staff are close to constantly model good behaviour and to give gentle reminders. This helps children to develop important social skills to be ready for their move on to school.

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

- Leaders and staff have a clear understanding of the key curriculum focus in all rooms, ensuring learning is constantly weaved through a range of activities. Staff know the children in their care well and are aware of the children's next steps, ensuring every child makes good progress.
- The manager and staff continually reflect on the experiences children receive in the nursery. They make changes to improve outcomes for children. Overall, staff are keen to support children to develop their communication and language skills well. For example, they ask questions to encourage children to talk about their play. However, during some activities, while the more confident children voice their ideas and knowledge, staff do not always consider how to challenge children's thinking skills further and to make their own predictions.
- Children develop a good awareness of number and mathematical concepts. Staff model counting, measuring and comparing objects as children are engaged in play. Older children are excited to make fruit smoothies, where they learn to handle equipment safely and count the fruit into the blender. Staff extend children's vocabulary, for example introducing words such as halfway and a quarter. Children comment that their smoothies are 'yummy'.
- Staff support children's independence skills well. They teach children simple skills, such as feeding themselves from an early age, putting on their own coats and serving their own meals. As a result, children show good levels of

independence and confidence.

- Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported well. The special needs coordinator works alongside staff and other professionals to provide children with the additional help and the support they need. Staff are proactive in accessing early help when required and swiftly adapt activities to support any gaps in children's learning.
- Staff share information with parents about their children's care and learning. Parents talk positively about staff, and say that their children enjoy attending the nursery. They are happy with the communication and feedback that they receive on their children's learning and development. Leaders have created an inclusive environment, where they invite families to special events like the recent World Book Day or cultural celebrations throughout the year.
- Leaders have created a positive working environment. The manager and staff demonstrate good vision and ambition. Staff report they are happy in their roles and that they work well together as a team. Staff receive training and continued professional development. However, management do not provide a sufficient regular cycle of staff supervision to help all staff reflect and confidently deliver the highest quality of practice.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and staff are confident to demonstrate their understanding of the signs and indicators of abuse. They are clear on the action they would take if they suspected a child is at risk of harm or they had concerns about a member of staff. They have a secure understanding of the local authority procedures and of all safeguarding issues, such as the 'Prevent' duty and female genital mutilation. The manager ensures that staff complete regular training and have up-to-date safeguarding knowledge. Robust recruitment procedures and sufficient qualified staff working with the children ensure that suitable people are employed.

## **What does the setting need to do to improve?**

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

- extend staff's understanding of the strategies used for questioning children as they play, to further support children's predictions, thinking and investigative skills
- build on the arrangements for staff supervision and support, to further develop their skills and raise the quality of education to an even higher level.

## Setting details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	2614923
<b>Local authority</b>	Oxfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10265313
<b>Type of provision</b>	Childcare on non-domestic premises
<b>Registers</b>	Early Years Register
<b>Day care type</b>	Full day care
<b>Age range of children at time of inspection</b>	0 to 5
<b>Total number of places</b>	37
<b>Number of children on roll</b>	65
<b>Name of registered person</b>	Swinbrook House Nursery Schools Limited
<b>Registered person unique reference number</b>	2551542
<b>Telephone number</b>	01235 553943
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not applicable

## Information about this early years setting

Duchess Nursery Abingdon registered in 2020. It is located in Abingdon, Oxfordshire. The nursery is open five days a week, from 7.30am to 6.30pm, all year round, except for a week at Christmas. The provider receives funding to provide free early education for the children aged two, three and four years. There are 10 members of staff who work directly with the children. Of these, four staff hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 and a further three staff hold qualifications at level 2.

## Information about this inspection

### Inspector

Anneliese Fox-Jones

## Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the nursery received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the setting and has taken this into account in their evaluation of the setting.
- The inspector observed activities in the three main base rooms and on a walk. She talked to staff about the progress individual children are making and what they want the children to learn.
- The manager and the inspector completed a learning walk across all areas of the nursery to understand how the early years provision and the curriculum are organised.
- A joint observation was carried out by the inspector and the manager. The inspector observed interactions between staff and the children and the impact these have on children's learning.
- The inspector reviewed relevant documentation, including evidence of paediatric first-aid training. The inspector had a discussion with leaders about the evaluation of the setting and plans for improvement.
- The inspector spoke to parents and children during the inspection and took account of their views.

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.

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk)

This publication is available at <https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2023