

# Inspection of Mowden Pre-School

c/o Mowden Infant School, Bushel Hill Drive, Darlington, County Durham DL3 9QG

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Inspection date: 12 July 2023

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

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The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Good

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

### **The provision is good**

Children settle quickly into this exceptionally well-resourced and welcoming environment. Staff know children very well and ensure that their favourite resources are available from the very moment their day begins. This helps children to feel safe and secure in the pre-school. Staff are skilled practitioners. For example, they know when to stand back to give children the opportunities to demonstrate their can-do attitude to learning. Children show a determination to succeed as they act out the story of the 'Giant Turnip'. Children plan together how to get a weighted sack of imaginary turnips onto a barrow. They decide where to position themselves to hold the sack and that all children need to pull the sack at the same time. Children respond with beaming smiles at the very genuine praise staff give them for their achievements.

Children have many opportunities to learn about the natural world. Staff and children engage together in hunting for insects. Staff encourage children to use their thinking skills as they discuss together where the insects might be living in the garden. They remind children to handle the insects carefully as children place the insects onto their hands. Children show high levels of respect towards each other. They willingly share resources and invite children into their play. When required, staff very gently remind children of the rules and boundaries. They encourage children to think about the impact of their actions on children and adults.

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

- Staff use their detailed knowledge of every child to plan a curriculum that provides children with enjoyable experiences, which excite and stimulate them to learn. Staff are proficient in recognising what children are learning and ensure that resources are available for their learning to continue. For example, when children find insects, staff instinctively add in magnifying glasses. This means that children's learning can be extended without interruption to children's play.
- Children's communication and language are supported extremely well. Staff listen intently to children's conversations and use effective questions to help children to think for themselves. For example, when hunting for insects, staff wonder, 'Where spiders might live'. Children talk about the different areas of the garden as they search for spider's webs.
- Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have very high levels of recognition and support. Staff are proactive in ensuring that they work in partnership with a wide range of other professionals to enable children to make the best possible progress in all their areas of development.
- Parents are very complimentary about the service the pre-school provides. They praise the commitment of staff for the progress their children are making. Parents appreciate the flexibility for children's attendance to accommodate their

working hours. In particular, the parents of children with SEND value the high level of support given to themselves and their children.

- Children relish the space the outdoor area provides. They confidently negotiate obstacles as they move around the different areas of the garden. Staff encourage children to climb onto a wooden frame and to negotiate the steps leading into the pre-school.
- Staff are skilled at enabling children to remember previous events. For example, they discuss the different vegetables growing in the pre-school garden. Children recall a recent visit to nearby allotments and talk about the variety of fruits and vegetables growing there.
- Staff provide children with many opportunities to access their immediate environment. For example, staff encourage children to write their own shopping lists and take children to the local shops to buy their ingredients. This helps children to learn about developing relationships as they meet different people.
- Staff work together as a tight-knit team, where everyone looks after each other. Strong teamwork and shared high aspirations for children are at the heart of everything they do.
- Some staff bring numbers and counting into children's play. For example, they encourage children to count how many peas are in the pods they have just opened. However, staff across the pre-school do not use mathematical language consistently. This means that staff do not maximise opportunities as they arise to bring numbers and counting into children's learning.
- Staff do not fully consider how daily routines, for example mealtimes, can be used to extend and consolidate children's learning.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff have an excellent understanding of their responsibilities to protect children. They know the procedures to follow if they have concerns about children's welfare, including protecting children from extremist views. The manager and staff ensure that the premises are secure at all times and any potential hazards to children's safety are identified and minimised. Secure policies and regular staff training strengthen all aspects of safeguarding practice. Managers have robust recruitment procedures to ensure that only those suitable to work with children do so.

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

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

- support staff to be consistent in developing children's mathematical understanding, particularly children's understanding of numbers and counting
- review the organisation of some daily routines to ensure that all opportunities are consistently used to extend and develop children's learning.

## Setting details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	301168
<b>Local authority</b>	Darlington
<b>Inspection number</b>	10295219
<b>Type of provision</b>	Childcare on non-domestic premises
<b>Registers</b>	Early Years Register
<b>Day care type</b>	Sessional day care
<b>Age range of children at time of inspection</b>	3 to 4
<b>Total number of places</b>	20
<b>Number of children on roll</b>	37
<b>Name of registered person</b>	Mowden Pre School Group Committee
<b>Registered person unique reference number</b>	RP518416
<b>Telephone number</b>	07812429563
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	11 December 2017

## Information about this early years setting

Mowden Pre-School registered in 1999 and is located in Darlington. The pre-school employs seven members of staff. Of these, two staff are qualified at level 5 and five staff at level 3. The pre-school is open Monday to Friday, from 8.45am to 3.15pm, during term time. It provides funded early education for three- and four-year-old children.

## Information about this inspection

### Inspector

Denise Charge

## Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the pre-school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with staff and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the pre-school.
- The manager and inspector carried out a learning walk. This helped the inspector to understand how they organise the early years provision and the curriculum.
- The inspector observed the quality of education, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact of this on children's learning.
- A joint observation was carried out with the manager.
- The inspector spoke with children, parents and staff during the inspection.
- The inspector looked at various documents, including those related to the suitability and qualifications of staff and records of children's learning.

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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