

Inspection of Ducklings Monkston @ St Barts

Monkston Community Centre, St. Bartholomews, Monkston, MILTON KEYNES MK10 9FJ

Inspection date: 18 September 2023

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

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children show a keen curiosity in all aspects of their play. They confidently explore and extend their play by transporting resources from inside to outside. Staff have developed an effective curriculum that successfully identifies children's needs and uses their interests to extend their experiences, thinking and knowledge. Staff use children's interests to plan for their next steps in learning and to close any identified gaps in their development. For example, outdoors, staff encourage children to use digging tools to explore mud, especially children who have not experienced this before.

Staff use information about children's home lives to enhance and enrich their experiences in the pre-school. For example, children confidently experiment with a wealth of new experiences outdoors, such as discovering plants, leaves and bugs, and they use tools that they may not have used before.

Children learn to develop personal care skills quickly and purposefully. They use staff demonstrations and explanations well to help understand the importance of routine hygiene procedures. For example, children follow pictorial aids and listen to staff when washing their hands after toileting and before snack time. Children learn to make healthy choices at snack time. They use knives to cut stalks off strawberries and to chop bananas into chunks. They independently find their boots to play in the nature garden and attempt to put them on themselves. Children confidently communicate and express their needs through words, gestures, expressions and pictorial aids.

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

- Children are settled gradually into the pre-school. Staff help them to become aware of their environment and guide them through the routine of the day. Staff use calm conversations and gestures to aid children's understanding. Staff gather some information from parents before children start to attend the pre-school. However, this is not consistently used to full effect to support children to feel reassured, welcome and secure. This results in some children taking longer to form effective attachments and bonds with their key person.
- Children's physical development is highly promoted. Children enthusiastically try new movements and staff successfully help them to learn from others. For example, children copy others using plastic hoops and wriggle their hips to make them move down their bodies. Staff understand the importance of developing children's core strength to enable them to use their bodies more effectively. They encourage children to balance, move creatively and use equipment imaginatively. For example, children think about how to move across the raised ladder bridge independently. They carefully balance and stay safe across the

equipment.

- Children learn to develop friendships with their peers. Staff encourage them to work together to learn new skills. For example, staff ask children to show each other how to make pens work. They use these together to make marks for a purpose. They show their marks proudly to all staff. Other children show a clear understanding of what is appropriate behaviour. They confidently tell staff when their friends' actions have an impact on their emotions.
- The management team works closely with staff to make improvements and promote the impact this has on children's care and development. Management and staff have made significant improvements since the pre-school's last inspection. However, the management team does not always encourage staff to reflect on their immediate practice or make prompt changes to have a bigger impact on children's learning and experiences.
- Staff develop professional relationships with other agencies and practitioners to provide a consistent approach to children's lives. Staff work closely with school staff to provide a smooth transition for when children move on to their next stage of learning. They develop good communication links with other providers to promote continuity for children's learning.
- Parents make positive comments about the quality of care and learning children receive. They receive regular information from staff's communications, through social media platforms and via verbal feedback at the start and end of the sessions. Staff provide ideas and guidance on how to support children's learning at home.
- Staff source local information and use this effectively to relate to the community in which children live. This helps to support families and their children and highly reflects children's backgrounds and different ways of living. As a result, children learn to appreciate and respect each other's backgrounds and feel proud of their own cultures.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff have a clear knowledge of the procedures to follow if they have a concern about a child in their care. They work cohesively with other agencies and professionals to provide a consistent approach to promoting children's welfare and ongoing care. Staff have a confident knowledge of the signs and symptoms of child abuse. Children learn to keep themselves safe. Staff support this well through clear explanations, discussions and using 'golden rules' to help children to take responsibility for their play environment. Staff provide a safe and secure play environment for children. Routine headcounts and effective deployment of staff ensure that children are sensitively supervised.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- use information and initial observations more effectively to fully support children to settle in and develop secure bonds and attachments with staff
- develop staff's confidence to change practice promptly to make a bigger impact on children's experiences and learning.

Setting details

Unique reference number	2603041
Local authority	Milton Keynes
Inspection number	10265465
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 4
Total number of places	43
Number of children on roll	28
Name of registered person	Ducklings Limited
Registered person unique reference number	RP910109
Telephone number	01616530124
Date of previous inspection	8 November 2022

Information about this early years setting

Ducklings Monkston @ St Barts registered in 2020. It is located in Monkston Community Centre, Monkston, Milton Keynes. The pre-school is open from Monday to Friday, term time only. Sessions are from 8.45am to 2.45pm. The pre-school provides funded early education for three- and four-year-old children. There are five members of staff who work directly with the children, all of whom hold recognised childcare qualifications at level 2 or level 3.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Claire Parnell

Inspection activities

- The inspector discussed any continued impact of the COVID-19 pandemic with the provider and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the pre-school.
- The manager joined the inspector on a learning walk and talked to the inspector about the pre-school's curriculum and what they want children to learn.
- Children told the inspector about their friends and what they like to do when they are at the pre-school.
- The manager and the inspector carried out a joint observation during snack time.
- The inspector spoke to several parents 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.

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