

Inspection of Mucky Pups Pre School

Lancaster Boys and Girls Club, Dallas Road, LANCASTER LA1 1TP

Inspection date: 24 October 2023

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

Children are greeted warmly by staff and quickly settle into their learning. Children feel safe and happy in this calm and nurturing learning environment. Staff provide a range of interesting resources and real-life experiences for children. For example, children enjoy regular trips to the local shops to purchase food for their snacks. There is a real sense of family in the pre-school, as children of all ages play together. Older children look out for their younger peers, and they learn from each other. All children are encouraged to independently put their things away, put on their slippers or change into waterproof suits and wellies when going outdoors.

Staff have high expectations for children's behaviour. They help children understand the 'golden rules' and promote good manners. As a result, children play cooperatively and can be heard saying 'please' and 'thank you' to each other as they play. Children find many new things to explore, as well as familiar activities both indoors and outdoors. Staff use sensitive interactions and relevant questions to extend children's thinking as they play. As a result, children make good progress in their learning across the curriculum. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, staff pay close attention to ensuring any gaps in children's social skills and language development have been addressed.

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

- Staff plan activities to promote the well-being of children. Children form strong, trusting bonds with their key person, who stays with them throughout their time in pre-school. Special days, including 'Mindfulness Mondays', help children to explore and talk about their feelings.
- Staff promote children's language skills well. They listen carefully to children and give them time to communicate their ideas. For example, children beam with delight to find an array of creatures under a log during a bug hut. Children and adults engage in back-and-forth dialogue about what the bugs might do and where they might go. Children learn to test out their ideas and extend their thinking.
- The curriculum for literacy helps children to develop a love of books. Children listen intently as staff read stories with expression and joy. They talk about new words and predict what might happen in the story. This is helping to widen children's vocabulary and use of language.
- Support for children's physical development is good. They develop their small muscles by doing practical tasks. For example, children twist the dial on the cereal dispenser to pour their own breakfast and use knives to cut up soft fruit. Outdoors, children enjoy opportunities for climbing and balancing on planks and tyres. These opportunities help to develop children's coordination, balance and strength.

- Staff understand how children learn. They plan play experiences that spark children's curiosity and extend their individual learning well. However, some group activities do not accurately match children's stages of development. As a result, some children are less engaged in their learning and become distracted.
- Partnerships with parents and carers are strong. Staff use information from parents about children's home experiences to engage in meaningful conversations with children and to help develop their self-confidence. Parents enjoy regular written updates on their children's progress and value the way in which staff develop nurturing relationships with their children.
- Staff support children to build positive attitudes to learning. Children quickly become effective problem-solvers and persevere when things get tricky. For example, children work together to find a solution when they discover their dough is too sticky. They recall previous learning and know to add more flour to their mixture. Children rapidly become motivated and resilient learners.
- Leaders have a clear vision for the setting. There is a stable team of staff who feel well supported. Staff are given responsibility for the development of curriculum areas. This supports the delivery of a balanced curriculum and means that staff are continually learning from each other.
- Staff use their knowledge of child development to identify additional needs early on. They modify their teaching and the curriculum where necessary and work with parents to plan effective use of any additional resources. In this way, staff help all children make the best progress from their starting points.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders use regular meetings to refresh staff knowledge and understanding of safeguarding. As a result, staff understand what signs may indicate that a child is at risk of harm. They know what action to take to keep children safe. Leaders carefully monitor accidents and carry out appropriate risk assessments. Staff support children to keep themselves safe by reinforcing good hygiene practices. For example, children are asked to remember to 'catch their cough' by putting their hand over their mouth. Staff also talk with children about potential dangers in the pre-school environment or out on the roads.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- focus more precisely on learning intentions for individual children, particularly during group activities, so that all children remain engaged and can access the learning intended.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY410312
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10289531
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	1 to 4
Total number of places	24
Number of children on roll	61
Name of registered person	Dallas Road Kids Club
Registered person unique reference number	RP531968
Telephone number	01524849106
Date of previous inspection	28 November 2017

Information about this early years setting

Mucky Pups Pre School registered in 2010. The pre-school operates from the Lancaster Boys and Girls Club in the centre of Lancaster, Lancashire. The pre-school employs eight members of childcare staff. Of these, two hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3, one holds appropriate early years qualifications at level 5 and two members of staff have qualified teacher status. The pre-school opens from Monday to Friday for 50 weeks of the year. Sessions are from 8.00am until 6.00pm. The pre-school provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Dawn France

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 deputy manager joined the inspector on a learning walk and talked to the inspector about their curriculum and what they want their children to learn.
- The inspector carried out joint observations of group activities with the deputy manager.
- Children told the inspector about their friends and what they like to do when they are at pre-school.
- The inspector observed the interactions between staff and children.
- Parents shared their views of the setting with the inspector.
- The inspector talked to staff at appropriate times 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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