

Inspection of Downside Pre-School

Downside Pre-School, Oakwood Avenue, Dunstable, Bedfordshire LU5 4AS

Inspection date: 19 January 2024

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	Not applicable
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What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

From the time they come into the preschool, children enjoy playing and exploring. They move around the rooms and garden, selecting activities and resources that they like or that interest them. Staff sensitively support new children and those who are less confident to find the resources they like. They gently encourage and praise children when they make decisions for themselves. This helps children to become confident, enthusiastic learners.

Children think through how they can solve problems. For example, they decide they need to use glue or tape to add additional pieces of paper to their art creations. They proudly show their achievements to the attentive staff, who ask them questions about what they have made. This helps to support children's growing self-esteem and helps to promote their individual creativity.

Children benefit from the clear focus of the curriculum that staff plan and deliver. There is a particular emphasis on children's social and personal development and their skills in communication and language. This helps build on what children already know and understand. Staff share the same story with children every day for a week. During this time, children recreate the story using puppets and props. They recall the order of the story and copy words and phrases they remember. This helps children build on their emerging vocabularies while staff foster a love for books and stories.

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

- The manager is dedicated to continual improvements in the preschool and is an advocate for continuing professional development. She and her staff engage in many training opportunities and with visiting professionals. This contributes to the highly relevant strategies and practice that staff follow. This helps promote children's good progress.
- Children who speak English as an additional language are well supported from the time they start in the preschool. Staff encourage children to use picture cards and find out key words from parents in the language children speak at home. Parents and staff access an electronic application to help translate important information they need to share. This helps to ensure that staff have the accurate information they need to help keep children safe and to help settle them in the preschool.
- The manager and her staff quickly build good relationships with children and their parents. They find out what children are interested in to help trigger children's motivation to learn. Staff introduce new experiences that are memorable, helping to extend children's knowledge even more. Staff give parents ideas for how they can support children's learning and development at

home. They pass on information about courses and help that families can access from the neighbouring children's centre, helping to promote even more positive experiences for parents and their children.

- Children behave well. Staff encourage them to share and take turns, giving gentle reminders to help children find ways to resolve minor disputes themselves. For example, children who want to sit on the same chair reach a compromise so they can all be comfortable and reach the resources on the table. This contributes to the harmonious and industrious environment in which children are keen to explore and investigate.
- Staff teach children how to brush their teeth. Children use their own toothbrush and follow the simple instructions staff give them. Children confidently tell visitors why it is important to brush your teeth. This contributes to the positive hygiene routines children adopt to help promote good oral health.
- Children welcome staff to join their self-chosen activities and games. They listen to the comments and ideas staff contribute, which encourage children to talk and develop their own ideas. However, not all staff introduce mathematical concepts and language into children's play. This restricts the possibilities children have to recall what they already know and to strengthen their understanding of concepts, such as quantity and size.
- Staff use their accurate assessments and observations to help plan what children need to learn next. However, some teaching does not focus on the precise needs of individual children. Consequently, at times, children are not sufficiently challenged to help them build on what they know and understand to help maximise their learning.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts children's interests first.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- introduce even more mathematical language and concepts in children's self-chosen play and every day routines
- support staff to recognise when and how to add more challenge during activities with children to help enhance children's learning even further.

Setting details

Unique reference number	2652352
Local authority	Central Bedfordshire
Inspection number	10308703
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register
Day care type	Sessional day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	2 to 4
Total number of places	44
Number of children on roll	43
Name of registered person	Downside Pre-School CIO
Registered person unique reference number	2652350
Telephone number	01582 660833
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

Downside Pre-School registered in 2021. The preschool employs eight members of childcare staff, six of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 or above. The manager holds early years professional status. The pre-school opens from Monday to Friday during term time only. Sessions are from 8.45am to 3.15pm. The preschool provides funded early education for two-, three- and four- year-old children. The preschool is situated on the site of St Augustine's Academy and Dunstable South Children's centre.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Katrina Rodden

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the provider had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the the impact of the pandemic with the manager and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the provision.
- The inspector went on a learning walk with the manager. The manager described the curriculum to the inspector.
- The manager and inspector carried out a joint observation of an activity and discussed the impact.
- The inspector observed activities in the group rooms and garden. She spoke to staff and children at appropriate times throughout the inspection.
- The inspector held meetings with the manager and with one of the trustees of the charity that runs the preschool.
- The inspector talked to staff about the progress children make in the preschool.
- The inspector read emails from parents about their thoughts on the provision. She took their views into consideration.

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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