

Inspection of Dorchester on Thames Pre-School

Horsa Hut, Dorchester St. Birinus School, Queen Street, Dorchester-on-Thames,
WALLINGFORD, Oxfordshire OX10 7HR

Inspection date: 7 February 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	Good
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What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children are happy and enjoy their time at the pre-school. They show they are confident and feel safe in the care of the kind and dedicated staff team as they separate from their parents at the door. This is a continued change that the staff have maintained since the pandemic. Children show they are eager to learn and that they enjoy the activities on offer. For example, as the children play with the puppets, they have fun creating stories with their friends and acting these out. Outside, children have many opportunities to build on their larger physical skills, as they climb on apparatus and use wheeled ride-on toys.

Children love to explore a variety of sensory textures, such as noodles with chop sticks, wet sand in the construction area and natural resources. Staff offer children a good amount of praise and encouragement, which in turn helps children to share, take turns and play cooperatively. Staff support children effectively to be responsible helpers and to gain independence. Consequently, children are keen to do things for themselves, such as wiping their own noses and changing their shoes. Staff support children's communication skills well, overall, through consistent discussions.

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

- The quality of education and children's overall experiences in the pre-school are good. Staff know the children well and provide a calm and positive learning environment. Staff have a clear understanding of how to embed the curriculum to maximise learning opportunities well. For example, as children explore with straws and pom-poms, staff interweave mathematical language to encourage children to count, learn about shape and colour. Activities such as these allow children to repeat tasks and refine skills for their eventual move to school.
- Staff are deployed well to meet the needs of the children. They implement planning and maximise children's learning in a wide range of activities that interest them. This enables children to make effective and sustained progress.
- Staff provide an environment that is rich in language. Staff communicate consistently with the children, which helps them learn to talk and understand well, overall. Children enjoy listening to stories. Staff read these with enthusiasm, which helps to develop children's concentration skills. However, at times, staff do not give children enough time to think or express their thoughts and ideas before asking further questions.
- Children learn to follow a healthy lifestyle. They enjoy their food brought in from home and eat together socially. Staff encourage children's independence at meal and snack times and offer good support as needed. Staff help children to understand the importance of good dental hygiene routines and support children in brushing their teeth after mealtimes. This supports children to lead a healthy

lifestyle.

- Children, overall, respond well to the changes in the routine and stop and listen when staff clap to indicate this. However, at times, some disruptions to play can be avoided, especially at snack time when all children stop their play to line up to see if it is their turn for snack. This often leaves some children frustrated as their play is disrupted when it is not their turn.
- Children behave well, know the names of their friends and are building meaningful relationships with each other. Children show they are developing good friendships and they clearly enjoy spending time together. For instance, children are heard calling to their peers to join in with their play as they pretend to be superheroes.
- The committee and manager work well together and support the staff team appropriately. Staff show they are dedicated to their roles and comment they are happy in their work. All staff receive regular supervision and training opportunities, which in turn helps to enhance their professional development.
- Partnerships with parents and other professionals involved with children are strong. Staff ensure they obtain a good amount of information from parents when children first start. Parents comment positively about the pre-school, staff and how their children are progressing. Staff work closely with local schools to effectively support children's transfer to full-time education. This helps to promote continuity in meeting children's needs.

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:

- support staff to understand the importance of giving children the time they need to think about, and answer, questions to enable them to speculate, test their ideas and challenge their thinking
- review the organisation of the snack time routine, to ensure that all children stay focused on purposeful learning.

Setting details

Unique reference number	134311
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	10312164
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	20
Number of children on roll	23
Name of registered person	Dorchester Pre-School Committee
Registered person unique reference number	RP902020
Telephone number	01865 341805
Date of previous inspection	23 April 2018

Information about this early years setting

Dorchester on Thames Pre-School registered in 1993 and operates from purpose-built premises situated in the grounds of St Birinus Church of England Primary School in the village of Dorchester-on-Thames, near Wallingford. The pre-school is a committee run group and receives funding to provide early education for children aged two, three and four years. The pre-school opens five days a week during school term times, with various sessions between 9am and 3pm. The pre-school employs four staff, three of whom hold relevant early years qualifications.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Tracy Bartholomew

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 manager explained the nursery curriculum during a learning walk with the inspector.
- The manager and the inspector completed a joint observation of an activity together and discussed the quality of teaching and learning afterwards.
- Children spoke to the inspector about the activities they took part in.
- Parents shared their views of the setting with the inspector.
- 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 the future.

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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