

# Inspection of Hunsdon Ducklings

The Porta Cabin, Hunsdon JMI School, Hunsdon, Hertfordshire SG12 8NT

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Inspection date: 8 November 2024

**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 are happy and relaxed at this warm and friendly setting. When they arrive, staff greet them with kindness and immediately engage in lively chatter. Children are developing a strong sense of belonging. Staff recognise the importance of emotional security and have created a home-from-home setting. Children use the self-registration process to mark their arrival and enjoy looking at their family photos throughout the day. New children are supported with sensitivity and patience by caring staff who ensure that children feel safe and secure and can find their way.

Children behave well. Staff have clear expectations and these are regularly praised and spoken about. Consequently, children show respect and listen well to staff. Children play well together. Joyous laughter is heard as children hunt for worms in the soil and snip herbs for their 'potions'. Staff help children to manage low-level conflict through ongoing reminders about sharing and taking turns.

The well-planned curriculum provides an opportunity for all children to make progress from their starting points. Staff recognise the need for the curriculum to be flexible and adapt their teaching to meet the emerging enquiries that children present. Experiences are rich and ambitious, providing children with opportunities to deepen and broaden their existing knowledge and skills, such as when they grow plants and visit the local aerodrome.

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

- Staff provide children with incredible opportunities to learn about the wider world. They experience village life as they regularly visit the local area. Children search for tyre tracks, forage for berries and visit the allotment. Visits further afield provide children with experiences such as travelling on a bus or train. In the garden, they enhance their senses as they make 'potions' with real lemons and herbs.
- Children know more and remembering more. They talk with excitement as they remember chicks that hatched from eggs. Staff build children's knowledge by expertly connecting books and stories to real life experiences, such as drinking hot chocolate in autumn. Useful information about wildlife is also displayed around the setting to extend children's knowledge from a recent story about a fox.
- Children show high levels of concentration as they play. They show curiosity and enquiring minds as they seek answers to their questions. Staff support children well with these investigations, offering questions that provoke thinking. However, the organisation of snack time results in play being stopped, and concentration for some children is interrupted. During this time, some children become

disengaged as they wait for snack time to finish.

- Children are supported to make independent choices throughout the day. They vote for 'book of the day', which activities to take part in and what fruit to eat for snack. Children show increasing independence and manage their personal needs, such as handwashing and putting on coats with skill. They approach physical play with positivity and energy as they run around a track and ride bicycles. Children are developing positive attitudes to healthy lifestyles.
- Children enjoy being creative. They make bright and colourful firework pictures with glue and glitter. Children learn about famous artists and make their own artistic patterns from a range of materials. Children are developing sound mathematical concepts. They count their friends at circle time and discover concepts, such as 'full' and 'empty', as they pump water around a circuit.
- Children use language well. New and interesting vocabulary is introduced to children as they play. Staff expand on familiar words, such as 'big' and 'small' with words such as 'enormous' and 'tiny'. This helps children to expand their use of words. However, on occasion, staff do not best help children to consolidate learning. For example, when using the word 'pressure' at the water wall, children are not shown the impact of pressure on the water flow to help connect the experience with the new word.
- Partnership working is strong. Parents speak highly of the kind and supportive team and express their happiness about the progress children make. They commend the exceptional communication from the staff regarding their children and the progress they make. Leaders use evaluation and regular 'team talks' to discuss areas for improvement and areas of training that will enhance the quality of teaching further.

## 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 connect new vocabulary with real-life experiences that help children understand and apply meaning to the new words they hear
- review arrangements for snack time to reduce interruptions to children's play, ensuring that children have opportunity to remain deeply engaged in their play and learning and sustain levels of concentration.

## Setting details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	127950
<b>Local authority</b>	Hertfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10367303
<b>Type of provision</b>	Childcare on non-domestic premises
<b>Registers</b>	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
<b>Day care type</b>	Sessional day care
<b>Age range of children at time of inspection</b>	2 to 4
<b>Total number of places</b>	16
<b>Number of children on roll</b>	27
<b>Name of registered person</b>	The Hunsdon Ducklings Pre-School Committee
<b>Registered person unique reference number</b>	RP523788
<b>Telephone number</b>	01279 841044
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	4 February 2019

## Information about this early years setting

Hunsdon Ducklings registered in 1995. The pre-school employs eight members of childcare staff. Of these, one holds a foundation degree at level 5, and four hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3. The pre-school opens from Monday to Friday, during the school term times. Morning sessions are from 9am to midday, a lunch club is offered from midday to 1pm, and afternoon sessions are from 1pm to 3pm. The pre-school also offers a breakfast and after-school club. It provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

## Information about this inspection

**Inspector**  
Clare Ford

## Inspection activities

- The manager and inspector completed a learning walk together of all areas of the pre-school and discussed the early years curriculum.
- The inspector observed the quality of education being provided, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact that this was having on children's learning.
- The manager and the inspector carried out a joint observation outside.
- Parents shared their views of the setting with the inspector.
- The manager showed the inspector documentation to demonstrate the suitability of staff.

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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