

Inspection of Down in The Woods Pre-School Ltd

The Annexe, Chichester Walk, Merley, Wimborne, Dorset BH21 1ST

Inspection date: 10 December 2024

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Good

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is outstanding

Leaders have created an ambitious and well-sequenced curriculum, focusing on the prime areas of learning. Children gain the skills they need for their future learning. Planned and spontaneous staff interactions contribute to the effective delivery of the clear curriculum intentions. Staff have an expert knowledge of connections between children's learning, such as linking the development of bigger physical skills to strengthen smaller physical skills in preparation for early writing. Younger children build strength in their arms as they confidently climb using the smaller apparatus inside. Older children use more-intricate skills when peeling stickers and handling small craft pieces to decorate their Christmas tree model. Children develop their problem-solving skills from an early age as they test their own ideas, placing different-sized toy figures on a miniature see-saw. They press one side down and watch them go up into the air, quickly realising that the bigger figures do not go as high.

Staff embrace the learning opportunities for children during snack. They talk to children about size, volume and weight. Children develop excellent early mathematical skills and demonstrate positive attitudes to their learning.

Staff have high expectations for children's behaviour, and gently revisit their 'rainbow rules'. Staff use interactions well to help refocus children as they begin to learn how to regulate their own behaviours. Staff consistently praise children for their achievements, contributing to their emotional well-being and a strong sense of belonging. Staff model excellent manners and kindness to the children. Children show high levels of respect towards others.

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

- Staff plan activities based on children's individual interests and next steps in learning. They incorporate 'parent planning' as an addition to the curriculum. Parents share what they would like their children to learn next, and staff weave this into daily activities. For example, children sustain their focus during a colour-matching activity, based on practitioners and parents' input. This helps staff to provide a more holistic overview of the skills that children need to learn next. Children make excellent progress in their learning.
- Staff have a secure knowledge of children's development and work closely with parents to complete regular, detailed assessments of children's development. This helps to create a more precise overview of children's learning, helping staff to clearly identify what children need to learn next. Staff use targeted intervention times to closely monitor children's communication and language skills. As a result, staff promptly identify and swiftly implement strategies to help close gaps in children's learning.

- Staff thoughtfully support children's early literacy skills. They help to ignite children's imaginations as they encourage children to begin to create their own stories. For example, children name their characters and excitedly describe what they want them to do next in the story, such as going to visit the fairground. Staff use expressive gestures and voices when storytelling to bring the story to life. Children watch in excitement and they laugh together, developing their love of literature.
- Staff place a strong focus on developing children's communication. Younger children display excellent language skills for their age and use these effectively to communicate their ideas during play. Older children use more-complex vocabulary when revisiting learning about ice. For example, together, children discuss the process of melting. Staff use sign language to help facilitate communication. Children are confident communicators.
- Staff provide many opportunities for children to engage with their local community. Children learn about kindness and empathy for others when handing out flowers to people in the community as an act of kindness. Staff link with educational settings in other countries, and children learn about children who live in other parts of the world, such as Ghana. Staff teach children about the similarities and differences of others. Children gain a deep understanding of culture and diversity, preparing them for life in modern Britain.
- The passion and commitment of leaders influences all aspects of the setting. The team strives to provide the best possible care for children. They consistently reflect on the provision and make continuous improvements that benefit the children. For example, due to an increase in children, staff have recently created a new space for smaller-group times. This helps to focus more precisely on specific learning intentions for children.
- Staff build strong relationships with parents. Parents report on the consistent information-sharing and know children's next steps in learning. Parents comment on the 'remarkable' progress that children make, in particular their confidence and social interactions. Parents value the staff's dedication to and passion for their children's learning.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY350656
Local authority	Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole
Inspection number	10367926
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	24
Number of children on roll	60
Name of registered person	Down In The Woods Pre-School Ltd
Registered person unique reference number	RP522457
Telephone number	07787954387
Date of previous inspection	1 March 2019

Information about this early years setting

Down in The Woods Pre-School Ltd opened approximately 30 years ago under previous ownership, and re-registered in 2007 under sole ownership. It operates from a purpose-built building in Merley, Wimborne. The pre-school is open from 9am to 3.30pm, Monday to Friday, during term time only. In addition, there is an after-school club from 3.15pm to 6pm during term time, and a holiday club that operates from 9am to 6pm during school holidays. There are seven members of staff, including the manager. Of these, the manager holds an early years qualification at level 5, four staff hold qualifications at level 3 and two staff hold qualifications at level 2. The setting offers government funded places.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Chelsea Woollard

Inspection activities

- The manager and deputy manager joined the inspector on a learning walk and talked to the inspector about their curriculum and what they want children to learn.
- The inspector observed children's activities and staff's teaching indoors and outdoors.
- The inspector spoke to several parents and children during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The inspector observed the quality of teaching and carried out a joint observation.
- A meeting was held between the inspector and the management team to discuss leadership.
- The inspector looked at relevant documentation and reviewed evidence of the suitability of staff working in the nursery.

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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