

Inspection of Little Ducklings Pre-School

Holbein Close, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG21 3EX

Inspection date: 15 July 2025

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	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children are happy and settled at this inclusive pre-school. They are greeted at the door by friendly staff and settle quickly into activities alongside their peers. Staff provide a well-thought-out, ambitious curriculum. There is a strong emphasis on outdoor learning, which features prominently in the daily activities and routines for all children. For instance, in the mud kitchen, children practise their communication and language skills as they excitedly share their views and discuss their pretend play. They create and write their own recipes, which supports the development of early literacy skills. They source what they need and strengthen their arm muscles as they stir in their ingredients, such as herbs, broccoli, mud and water. Staff consistently support children to follow their own interests and develop their ideas. All children thrive at this welcoming setting. They make good progress in their development from their starting points.

Staff have high expectations for children's behaviour. They demonstrate this as they give children gentle reminders to sit still while eating and explain why. Staff praise children for sharing and respecting the ideas of their friends. This has a positive impact on their social skills. Children are curious and engage positively with others. For example, they work together to build guttering runs and experiment with various objects to explore cause and effect.

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

- The management team has a clear and ambitious vision, with a strong focus on continuous improvement. Supervisions and appraisals consider staff well-being, as well as improving their practice and professional development. Recent training has had a positive impact on how staff plan for and support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This has had a positive effect on the ongoing development of children.
- Staff create a child-focused curriculum that meets the needs and interests of each child. They speak confidently about their key children and how they are planning for the next steps in their learning. For example, communication and language development is a high priority for children. Staff engage children in exploring books and storytelling. They teach children songs and rhymes, which helps to build on their speech and vocabulary. As children hunt for bugs in the garden, staff introduce words to help children describe the insects they find.
- Support for children with SEND is strong. Staff are very proactive in getting children additional support, and they work closely in partnership with parents and other professionals to help children achieve their goals. The management team uses additional funding well, such as for purchasing resources that motivate children's specific interests and individual learning needs.
- Staff plan various learning experiences to encourage children to recognise

numbers and to count beyond what they already know. However, they do not focus on opportunities to introduce concepts such as size, shape and measure to help deepen children's mathematical understanding even further.

- Staff support children's health and well-being effectively. They engage children in active conversations about the benefits of eating healthy food as part of snack time and pretend play. Children enthusiastically discuss the fruit and vegetables they are growing in the garden and show a good understanding of where food comes from.
- Staff are good role models and consistently show kindness towards children in their care. When minor disputes occur between friends, they know how to intervene to help resolve these. Children are patient and learn to take turns. They independently use sand timers and show respect to their friends.
- Staff promote children's physical development well. For example, children build on their coordination skills as they throw and practise catching bean bags. Staff challenge and inspire them further by adding resources, such as buckets.
- Staff establish strong partnerships with professionals from other settings that children attend. This ensures a coordinated approach to each child's care and learning needs, such as with potty training. Staff hold meetings and work closely with teachers at the relevant schools that children will attend. This ensures a smooth transition and helps prepare children for the next stage of their education.
- Staff form close partnerships with parents. Some examples of parent involvement include access to a lending library, daily discussions and sharing information via a digital app. Parents feel that communication from the setting is highly effective. They feel well informed of what their children are 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:

- strengthen support for children to help them develop a deeper understanding of mathematical concepts.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY424761
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	10374419
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Day care type	Sessional day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	2 to 4
Total number of places	30
Number of children on roll	34
Name of registered person	Little Ducklings Pre-School Basingstoke
Registered person unique reference number	RP907293
Telephone number	01256 413794
Date of previous inspection	25 October 2024

Information about this early years setting

Little Ducklings Pre-School re-registered in 2011 and is situated in Basingstoke, Hampshire. The pre-school employs eight members of staff. Seven staff members hold appropriate qualifications at level 3 or above. The pre-school opens Monday to Friday, from 8am to 3pm, during school term time. The pre-school provides funded early education for children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Jane Franks

Inspection activities

- The manager joined the inspector on a learning walk and talked about their curriculum and what they want their children to learn.
- The inspector observed the implementation of the curriculum during activities, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact this has on children's learning.
- Parents shared their views through written comments and discussions during the inspection, and the inspector took account of all feedback received.
- The inspector spoke with staff and children at suitable times throughout the inspection.
- During the inspection, the inspector held a meeting with the management team. She looked at relevant documentation, such as evidence of the suitability of staff working in the pre-school.
- A joint observation was completed and discussed with the manager.

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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