

Inspection of Downside Nursery

The Old School Room, Downside Road, Downside, Cobham, Surrey KT11 3NA

Inspection date: 9 June 2025

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 flourish in the small, welcoming and cosy nursery. A strong emphasis is on supporting children's well-being and promoting outdoor learning in the natural environment. Time is given to ensure children feel safe, secure and settled. Settling-in sessions are tailored to meet the needs of the individual child. Children happily arrive with enthusiasm and excitement to start their day. They leave their parents with ease and quickly engage in their play. Children demonstrate they are confident and secure and have established warm and trusting bonds with their key person and the small staff team, who speak knowledgeably about the children in their care.

Children benefit from a well-thought-out and ambitious curriculum that builds on what they already know and can do. Staff have high expectations of the children and know them and their individual needs well. They tailor their interactions with the children around their individual development needs. Staff are effective in engaging with other professionals, when required. Personalised strategies are in place to support children who require additional support. This ensures all children make progress from their starting points. Children are well behaved and respond positively to peers and adults.

Children demonstrate good physical skills and an understanding of taking risks in safe surroundings. For example, they relish climbing over and hanging from the climbing frame. This helps children to learn to assess risks in their play and to understand their safety needs and those of others. Older children confidently explore their outdoor environment, leading their play as they animatedly search for bugs and flowers. They work together as a team to lift leaves and use magnifying glasses to identify insects, asking for help when required. Children are confident and inquisitive learners and delight in the results when holding buttercups under adults' chins.

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

- Staff support children's emerging communication skills well. They name objects and draw children's attention to the colours, shapes and features of the items they play with. Staff introduce more complex words into play, such as 'triceratops,' and children attempt to copy them. They encourage children to find out and use the correct names for members of the Royal Family and the different gems on the crowns. This helps children learn new vocabulary and supports their good communication and language development.
- Managers have designed an aspirational curriculum that is implemented in a well-sequenced way throughout the nursery. They place high importance on supporting all areas of learning, offering French lessons and gymnastics. When

learning about frogs and life cycles, staff teach children familiar songs, such as 'Five Little Speckled Frogs'. The visiting music teacher links songs to familiar stories and creates new songs that delight and inspire the children.

- Staff support children's hand-eye coordination superbly. Children eagerly squeeze play dough to make models and manipulate wet sand with scissors. Younger children confidently make marks, add googly eyes, and talk about drawings of their family. Children are provided with the opportunities to develop the skills they will need for later writing.
- Mathematical language is woven into children's activities and play. For example, staff ask children which dinosaurs are bigger or smaller. Older children concentrate as they find the corresponding shapes to draw around to represent gems on their crowns. This means that children are starting to understand simple mathematical concepts.
- Staff support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities with kindness and sensitivity. They know the developmental next steps for these children and keep this in mind during all their interactions. When they notice children making progress and meeting their milestones, staff demonstrate genuine joy and take time to celebrate these moments with the children.
- Staff know the children well and provide a balance of child-initiated and adult-led activities. Children show enjoyment as they explore resources independently and practise their skills. For example, older children use their small-muscle skills to build castles and towers with bricks and magnetic tiles. Young children practise filling and emptying cups in bubbly water, and staff encourage them to pop the bubbles. However, during group times and some planned sessions, staff do not consistently engage children, leading to children missing the intended learning opportunities.
- Children are supported to share and take turns. For example, staff ask younger children to pass toys and resources, doing this willingly, such as passing animals to each other to press into play dough. Older children are reminded to stand behind each other to make a line, when they go outdoors to do the daily weather check. Children patiently wait their turn, knowing that standing too close to the door leads to 'squashed noses'.
- The management has high expectations for the children attending and demonstrates a clear passion for providing the highest quality care and education. The management observes and monitors staff practice through observations, being hands-on, and role-modelling good practice. Staff speak positively about their roles and feel valued and supported through continuous professional development opportunities.

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:

- review group activities to deepen children's level of engagement and maintain purposeful teaching.

Setting details

Unique reference number	122455
Local authority	Surrey
Inspection number	10399132
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 8
Total number of places	37
Number of children on roll	46
Name of registered person	Griffiths, Krystyna Maria
Registered person unique reference number	RP907951
Telephone number	01932 866556
Date of previous inspection	21 November 2019

Information about this early years setting

Downside Nursery registered in 1986 and is located in Downside, Surrey. The nursery is open on weekdays, during term time, Monday to Thursday 9am to 3.45pm, and Friday 9am to 1.30pm, with the option to attend breakfast club from 8am. During the summer and Easter school holidays, the setting is open from 9am to 1.30pm for children aged from two to eight years. The provider receives funding for the provision of free early education for children aged two, three and four years. The nursery employs seven members of staff. Of these, one has qualified teacher status, one has early years professional status and four hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Amanda Harrison

Inspection activities

- The inspector viewed the provision and discussed the safety and suitability of the premises.
- The manager and inspector completed a learning walk together of all areas of the nursery and discussed the early years curriculum.
- The inspector spoke to children to find out about their time at the setting.
- The inspector talked to staff at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their views.
- 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 inspector carried out a joint observation of a group activity with the manager.
- Parents shared their views of the setting with the inspector.

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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