

Inspection of Doodlebugs Preschool

1 West Way, Southwell Business Park, PORTLAND, Dorset DT5 2NA

Inspection date:

23 September 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

Good

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children are confident and settle quickly and engage in activities of their choosing. Children communicate their needs well. They share and take turns. Children are independent and persevere as they play and learn. Children are happy and form strong relationships with staff and peers. Children receive purposeful, sensitive interactions from staff, which builds on what children already know and can do. Staff are kind and caring. They know children in their care well and show interest in their thoughts, ideas and stories. The respectful relationships modelled by staff are mirrored by children. Children show care towards others. For example, when children wish to have a turn as the shopkeeper, children declare 'taking turns is fun and kind'.

There are clear links between the aims of the curriculum and the support staff provide for children. Staff prioritise supporting children's confidence to flourish. Each interaction between staff and children boosts children's self-belief. Children approach learning activities with interest and curiosity. This promotes success in learning and good progress. Staff support children to take ownership of their learning and children enjoy responsibilities, such as being 'mini teacher' for the day. Children also enjoy being chosen to count their friends for singing at the start of songs during sign and sing sessions. Children show such happiness and pride as they loudly count to five and their friends know that this signifies time to sing. Children delight in being trusted with responsibility and it further fuels their engagement in learning.

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

- Children learn to manage and assess risks for themselves. Staff speak with children about the review board and ask them to consider if risks, such as needing the toilet, sun burn, being cold or thirsty, have been managed. Children pause, think and consider if actions taken have lessened the risk of accidents or discomfort. They then all agree that they are ready and safe to play outside.
- Staff well-being is good. Staff feel valued. They receive good support from leaders to develop their skills and share their ideas and knowledge. For example, a member of staff has been chosen to be the communication champion for the setting. Passion and drive to support all children to be able to confidently communicate is a strength of the staff team.
- Children engage well in their play and when taking part in group-time activities. However, at times, children's listening and attention skills are not best supported and staff have expectations of children that do not meet children's age and stage of development.
- Leaders support older children to be ready for their transition to school. They collaborate effectively with staff at local primary schools. Children benefit from

regular visits to schools, where they take part in sports, picnics and celebrations. These opportunities help children build confidence for their next stage in learning.

- Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported. Staff provide children with targeted teaching that promotes progress. For example, children with speech and language delays benefit from communication boards being used consistently. Children's confidence flourishes as all children have methods to share their needs, wants and ideas swiftly.
- Staff support children's communication and language skills well. They model language consistently for children. For example, as children enjoy making potions, staff use capacity vocabulary clearly and deliberately to support children's understanding of full and empty. Children enjoy using these words as they create their own potions. Children also learn a range of communication strategies to promote confidence in sharing their wishes. For example, children use sign language to indicate they would like more milk at snack time.
- Staff prioritise children's well-being. They speak with children about their feelings and offer cuddles and reassurance as needed. However, at times younger children's well-being is not best supported. Staff do not have effective procedures in place to support the youngest children to be able to benefit from quality sleep times that are restorative.
- Parents speak highly of the nurturing staff. They are grateful for support they receive on aspects of parenting, such as toilet training, establishing positive behaviours at home and broadening the range of foods children experience. However, staff do not regularly share children's next steps in learning effectively with parents so they can support progress in the home.

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:

- improve strategies for sharing children's next steps in learning with parents so their learning can be best supported at home
- promote all children's listening and attention skills by adapting support strategies to meet the needs of children at different ages and stages of development
- implement effective procedures for younger children that need sleep times, so that high levels of well-being are promoted, and children benefit from restful, quality sleep.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY547567
Local authority	Dorset
Inspection number	10408320
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register
Day care type	Sessional day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	2 to 4
Total number of places	16
Number of children on roll	20
Name of registered person	Smyth, Sandra
Registered person unique reference number	RP547566
Telephone number	07927300212
Date of previous inspection	30 January 2020

Information about this early years setting

Doodlebugs Preschool registered in 2017. It is privately owned and is located in Portland, Dorset. The pre-school employs five members of childcare staff, four of whom hold qualifications at level 3, and one holds a qualification at level 1. The pre-school is open from Monday to Friday, during term time only. Sessions are from 8.30am until 3pm. The pre-school provides government funded places for childcare.

Information about this inspection

Inspector
Shirley Evel

Inspection activities

- The deputy manager, manager and inspector completed a learning walk together of all areas of the pre-school and discussed the early years curriculum.
- Children spoke to the inspector during the inspection.
- Staff spoke to the inspector during the inspection.
- Staff spoke to the inspector about how they support children with SEND.
- 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 joint observations of group activities with the manager.
- 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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