

Inspection of Duke of Gloucester Playgroup

29 Reg RLC, Duke of Gloucester Barracks, South Cernery, Cirencester GL7 5RD

Inspection date: 12 July 2023

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
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The quality of education	Outstanding
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is outstanding

All children thrive at this playgroup, achieving exceptionally well in their learning and development. The children all have excellent relationships with the staff, who have an in-depth understanding of their needs, interests and abilities. They are settled, happy and very confident. Full of smiles, children explore the inspiring indoor and outdoor learning environments with great enthusiasm. For example, those in the Lupins group race to play pirates on the wooden boat structure in the garden, sailing to places their friends suggest. Others sell 'popcorn' from the playhouse veranda. Two- and three-year-olds in the Bluebells group show their physical agility as they explore, balance on crates and logs, climb, slide and negotiate the outdoor space.

Children chat avidly about things they observe, what they are doing and have done, using their impressive vocabularies and language skills. Children tell visitors about the bird boxes they made, describing birds that use them. The youngest children show excitement when the older group join them outdoors. Both groups play exceptionally well together. Children gain excellent independence skills from a young age and are fully prepared to move on to school.

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

- The manager and staff are all highly enthusiastic and work with a passion to ensure that every child has the very best learning experiences at the playgroup. The manager has an excellent overview of where every child is in their learning. She works closely with staff to ensure they plan and implement an exciting curriculum that takes full account of what each child needs to learn next.
- The manager and staff team use every area of the building, garden and wooded area to their full potential. Each area is exceptionally well equipped and staff use resources highly effectively to promote each aspect of children's learning. For example, children enjoy the tranquillity of the sensory room, which is particularly well used for children who need time away from busy classrooms.
- Staff use every opportunity foster children's self-esteem. Children receive high praise for their achievements and staff show genuine pride and excitement when children achieve. For example, when a child who struggles to communicate verbally says a couple of words, they cheer with delight and praise the child.
- The manager and committee provide excellent staff support and work proactively to evaluate the effectiveness of the provision and to drive continuous improvement. Staff all embrace training opportunities to enhance the support and learning of children. For example, staff learned basic sign language to support children who find communication more difficult. They use sign language routinely during group activities and children in 'Lupins' sign back when their name is called and signed.

- Every child receives excellent support from staff. Staff instinctively challenge children to develop their language and thinking. They introduce new vocabulary, increase children's mathematical awareness and understanding of the world. They encourage children to develop a love of books, with books readily available, indoors and outdoors. Children listen avidly to stories. They talk about the characters and what they see in illustrations. They competently use writing implements, also readily available for example, to produce carefully drawn pictures for the inspector.
- Staff value the diverse family backgrounds of the children. Staff provide some bilingual support and understand the challenges military families experience. They work highly effectively to support children who may have a parent posted away and those scheduled to leave playgroup due to new postings. The curriculum encompasses cultural celebrations and traditions that reflect family homelands. Children learn to value diversity and to respect one another. Children recently learned about the occupations of many parents and enthusiastically recall their visits.
- Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive excellent support. The special educational needs coordinator is highly skilled and ensures these children are fully included. Staff know instinctively when children need extra help to deal with their feelings and frustrations and provide just the right support to foster their learning and independence. Individual learning plans are used and parents attribute their children's significant progress to the experiences and support the children receive at the playgroup.
- Partnerships with parents are outstanding. Parents describe the playgroup staff as 'fantastic, friendly, welcoming and highly supportive'. They feel extremely well informed about their children's learning and really appreciate opportunities to join their children in the setting. Parents read the informative information displayed outside daily and value online posts and daily conversations with staff. Family events are well attended. Children excitedly include their dads in their activities, during a stay-and-play session. Children draw, read, and play with farm animals, telling their dads all about what they have learned during the current farm topic.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The manager ensures that staff maintain a safe play environment and that all staff understand their safeguarding responsibilities. They have extra precautions to follow due to being on a military base and work closely with army personnel to adhere to these. They have a strict mobile phone policy, evident during the stay-and-play session; all visitors' phones were taken and stored safely outside the play rooms. Visitors are closely supervised and made aware of evacuation procedures. Staff complete regular safeguarding training and their knowledge is tested, to ensure they can recognise indicators of possible abuse or neglect and the action to take in the event of a concern. Staff are highly vigilant in their supervision of the children. They allow children to explore and take risks while helping them to learn

how to keep themselves safe.

Setting details

Unique reference number	101655
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	10298815
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	36
Number of children on roll	44
Name of registered person	Duke of Gloucester Barracks Playgroup Committee
Registered person unique reference number	RP519847
Telephone number	07821141579/0771509641
Date of previous inspection	11 January 2018

Information about this early years setting

Duke of Gloucester Playgroup registered in 1997 and is located within the Duke of Gloucester Regiment military base, South Cerney, Gloucestershire. The playgroup is open from 8am to 5.30pm each weekday during term times only. The playgroup receives funding for the provision of free early education for children aged two, three and four years. The playgroup committee employs eight members of staff and they all hold childcare qualifications ranging from level 2 to 7.

Information about this inspection

Inspector
Linda Witts

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the provider has had since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the provider and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the provider.
- The playgroup manager joined the inspector on a learning walk of all areas of the playgroup building and garden area and discussed the early years curriculum.
- The inspector observed the interactions between staff and the children. They observed the quality of education being provided in the Lupins group (pre-school children aged three and four years) and Bluebells group (two- and three-year-old children) and assessed the impact that this was having on children's learning.
- The inspector spoke with the manager about the leadership and management of the setting. They also completed a joint observation of a planned yoga activity.
- The inspector spoke to staff, children and parents at appropriate times during the inspection.
- Relevant documentation including written feedback from parents was read by 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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