

# Inspection of Paddocks Pre-School

Paddock Road, Wallingford, Oxfordshire OX10 9LT

---

Inspection date:

14 January 2025

---

## Overall effectiveness

---

## Requires improvement

The quality of education

**Requires improvement**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Requires improvement**

Personal development

**Requires improvement**

Leadership and management

**Requires improvement**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Outstanding

## **What is it like to attend this early years setting?**

### **The provision requires improvement**

Children enjoy their time at pre-school and show interest in the activities provided. For example, they make shapes out of play dough and use their imaginations well as they design colourful patterns with paint or chalk. Children spend a lot of time leading their own play due to a lack of staff attention to their play. Staff's expectations for what children can do are not always high enough.

The provider does not offer a curriculum that is ambitious and tailored to meet the learning needs of all children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff support is not sufficiently focused on helping children build on what they already know and can do, which limits children's progress overall.

Children form friendly and positive relationships with staff. They enjoy the company of their key person as they snuggle up on a chair to read a story together. Staff are attentive to children's care needs and support children's behaviour, through gentle reminders. However, group rules are not consistently promoted, to help all children to understand expectations, for example about joining in at tidy-up time. Staff do not adapt group times well enough so that young two-year-olds and children who are new to pre-school can successfully join in. This does not deter children. Initially they engage readily in activities, although their attention wanes quickly. Staff skills to help less-confident children develop their social skills are not strong enough, despite this being identified as a priority for some children. Staff promote children's independence and health to a suitable level.

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

- A lack of robust oversight has led to a decline in quality since the last inspection. Leaders' assessment of the overall quality is too optimistic, and some areas of weaker staff practice have not been identified successfully. Staff's knowledge of how to implement policies and procedures, including those that relate to safeguarding matters, varies across the team. The weaknesses do not have a detrimental effect on children's safety or well-being overall. The provider demonstrates sufficient capacity to make the required improvements.
- Staff access training events, including mandatory first aid and safeguarding updates. Leaders do not accurately identify gaps in staff knowledge to help to target staff development needs and improve their practice. Weaknesses in staff practice that impact on children's motivation and engagement are not sufficiently addressed by leaders. Training to improve staff practice with the children is not used to good effect.
- Staff comment positively on their workload and support for their well-being. Supervision and professional development, however, are not sufficiently focused on raising the quality of education to a good level. Inconsistencies in teaching,

including how staff plan for children's next steps and support children as they play, are not given suitable priority.

- The quality of education children receive is variable. Children do not benefit from a well-designed curriculum that builds securely on what they need to learn next. The range of activities on offer captures children's attention but fails to sustain their concentration because it lacks challenge and inspiration. Children make up their own games and help themselves to toys to fill the void. Staff's occasional interaction offers some enhancement to children's learning, such as to promote basic counting or shape recognition. Learning for some children is incidental and does not meet their individual needs well, leading to slower progress towards school readiness.
- Children enjoy playing outside. With help from staff, they take manageable risks as they jump between bricks and negotiate an obstacle course. However, weaknesses in curriculum delivery mean that there are few opportunities for children to overcome challenges or to learn to persevere at tasks. Consequently, children lack confidence in their own abilities.
- Children are encouraged by staff to share toys. They develop friendships during their time at pre-school. They enjoy the company of their peers as they take turns on the bicycles or read stories together.
- Staff promote children's independence to a suitable level. They help children butter toast at snack time and provide encouragement for children to put on their own coats. Staff cater well for children's additional dietary needs. Children learn about healthy eating through the provision of fruit at snack time.
- Links with parents and other professionals are established. Parents value the useful information from staff about their child, which is shared via an online application and through verbal handovers. However, staff's weak assessment of children's development limits the accuracy of the information shared with parents and other professionals. Children enjoy selecting a storybook to read with their family at 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 meet the requirements of the early years foundation stage, the provider must:**

	<b>Due date</b>
--	-----------------

provide effective supervision and training for all staff, including managers, so that weaknesses in practice are identified and addressed and staff are supported to provide high-quality experiences and interactions for children	15/04/2025
deliver an ambitious curriculum for all children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, so that children make the best possible progress in their development.	15/04/2025

## Setting details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	133711
<b>Local authority</b>	Oxfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10375384
<b>Type of provision</b>	Childcare on non-domestic premises
<b>Registers</b>	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
<b>Day care type</b>	Full day care
<b>Age range of children at time of inspection</b>	2 to 4
<b>Total number of places</b>	32
<b>Number of children on roll</b>	36
<b>Name of registered person</b>	Paddocks Pre-School Playgroup Committee
<b>Registered person unique reference number</b>	RP904630
<b>Telephone number</b>	01491 825333
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	17 May 2019

## Information about this early years setting

Paddocks Pre-School registered in 1993 and is located in Wallingford, Oxfordshire. During term time it is open from Monday to Friday, from 8.45am to 3.15pm. Sessions run from 8.45am to 11.45am and 12.15pm to 3.15pm, with a lunchtime session from 11.45am to 12.15pm. The pre-school also runs holiday play schemes from 8.45am to 3.15pm during the school holidays. The pre-school is in receipt of funding for the provision of free early education for children aged two, three and four years old. There are nine members of staff who work directly with the children. Of these, seven hold relevant qualifications up to and including level 3.

## Information about this inspection

### Inspector

Melissa Cox

## Inspection activities

- The manager joined the inspector on a learning walk and talked to the inspector about their curriculum and what they want the children to learn.
- The inspector talked to staff at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their views.
- Children told the inspector about their friends and what they like to do when they are at pre-school.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation of a group activity with the manager.
- The inspector observed the quality of education being provided, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact that this has on the children's learning.
- Parents and carers shared their views of the pre-school with the inspector.
- The manager showed the inspector documentation to demonstrate the suitability of staff.
- The inspector held a meeting with the nominated individual.

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.

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk)

This publication is available at <https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2025