

Inspection of Little Explorers Pre-School

Greenstead Community Centre, Hawthorn Avenue, Colchester CO4 3QE

Inspection date: 22 January 2020

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 build strong bonds with staff. They show how happy and safe they feel as they settle quickly into play and activities on arrival. Children demonstrate a strong sense of belonging and an understanding of positive behaviour. They talk about being kind to their friends, being helpful and polite, and listening carefully. Staff reinforce this further with regular, specific praise for children's efforts and recognising their individual achievements.

Children gleefully retell stories with puppets. They remember recently read books, such as 'The Gingerbread Man', in detail. Children repeat key refrains and give the puppets different voices as they act out the story events in sequence. Staff encourage children to think about what happens next, how the characters feel and what they say.

Children focus as they practise their small-muscle skills to carefully connect trains and use scissors to make their own jigsaw puzzles. They enjoy using these skills to take part in a pirate game. Children take turns to skilfully slot little plastic swords into narrow slits in a barrel. They shriek with delight when the pirate pops up unexpectedly. Children are keen to take part in group activities, such as dance and song times. They move energetically as they copy staff's actions, and they request their favourite songs.

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

- The manager and staff work with integrity to ensure that all children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are supported to have the best possible start in education. The manager meets regularly with staff to reflect on their practice and support them to extend their professional development. She also seeks feedback from parents to make changes and improvements. This has recently resulted in extended opening hours.
- Children begin to use mathematics purposefully in everyday situations. They count how many children are present to work out the correct numbers of cups needed. Children delight in choosing and matching the colours of their plates and cups.
- Staff support children's growing independence well. For example, staff encourage children to select resources and equipment, and make choices about what they would like to do next. Older children manage their own care needs, such as using the toilet then washing their hands, with gentle prompts from staff. However, on occasions, staff do not use opportunities to further support children's independence and personal hygiene practices, such as washing their hands before snack.
- Children learn about letter sounds and begin to recognise their name. Older

children find letter pebbles in the sand tray and proudly tell their friends and staff when they have found the correct letter for their name.

- Staff effectively plan enjoyable and creative activities that further support children's learning and development through play. For example, children practise control and coordination as they roll, cut and mould dough to make 'cakes' and 'gingerbread people' to sell in their pretend shop. Children show an interest in dressing up and role play. However, staff do not provide a diverse range of dressing-up materials to help children develop their imaginative play and make connections to their own first-hand experiences.
- Children develop technological skills. They learn to use simple devices, such as digital cameras. Children enjoy taking photographs around the setting and sharing them with others. They delight in taking photographs of the setting's fish in their tank.
- Staff promote good opportunities for children to learn about being healthy. They provide a broad range of food and encourage children to stay hydrated and be active. Staff talk to children about the impact of different foods on their teeth. Children recall these when talking about the items on offer at snack time.
- Parents speak highly of the setting. They say they are kept well informed about their children's progress and know what their children are learning currently. Parents praise the bonds their children develop with staff and how much their children look forward to attending.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The manager and her staff have a robust understanding of the procedures to follow should they have concerns about a child's welfare or the behaviour of an adult. They have attended training to support them in recognising the possible signs and symptoms of abuse. Staff access safeguarding training and regular information updates to help ensure their knowledge remains current. When appointing new staff, the manager follows thorough recruitment processes to assure herself that staff are suitable and capable to undertake the role. She reviews the ongoing suitability of staff regularly.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

To further improve the quality of the early years provision, the provider should:

- maximise opportunities to develop children's independence and personal hygiene skills further
- increase access to a wide range of diverse materials to help children develop their imaginative play and make connections to their own first-hand experiences.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY438275
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10075002
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	2 to 4
Total number of places	24
Number of children on roll	22
Name of registered person	Greenstead Social Club Playgroup
Registered person unique reference number	RP909916
Telephone number	07708499125
Date of previous inspection	18 April 2016

Information about this early years setting

Little Explorers Pre-School registered in 2011. The pre-school employs seven members of childcare staff. Of these, six hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3. The pre-school operates from Monday to Friday during term time only. Sessions run from 9am until 1pm. The pre-school provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Kate Oakley

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed the quality of teaching during activities indoors and outdoors and assessed the impact this has on children's learning.
- The manager took the inspector on a learning walk across all areas of the setting indoors and outdoors to understand how the early years provision and curriculum are organised.
- The inspector held a number of discussions with the manager. She looked at relevant documentation and reviewed evidence of the suitability of all persons working on the premises.
- The manager completed a joint observation and evaluation of an activity with the inspector.
- The inspector spoke to staff, children and parents at appropriate times during the inspection.

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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