

Inspection of The Playpen Preschool

North Crescent School, North Crescent, WICKFORD, Essex SS12 9AP

Inspection date: 22 March 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not applicable

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children relish their time at preschool. They excitedly arrive and leave their parents with ease. They are keen to investigate the activities provided within the garden and quickly settle with their friends. Children are inquisitive and eager to have a go at new experiences. For example, they are delighted at planting flowers in pots in the mud kitchen. Children demonstrate a passion for books and stories. They show sustained concentration as they sit and share stories with friends, under a willow arch in the garden. Younger children sit comfortably on cushions and listen intently to a favourite story with their key person. Children are skilful as they roll or drive their trikes down a grass mound. They squeal with delight and satisfaction when they reach the bottom. Children confidently know how to do this, as the staff have taught them how to keep themselves and others safe.

Children are clearly very comfortable in the cosy, familiar environment. They have established close bonds with all the staff who speak knowledgeably about the children attending. It is evident through conversation with the staff that they fully consider and respect children's individuality. Staff use assessment well and invest time in getting to know the children. Staff successfully plan activities around children's interests and what they need to learn next.

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

- The manager demonstrates a commitment and dedication to provide children with the best possible learning opportunities. She has a good understanding of the importance of monitoring staff's practice and supporting staff with their own professional development. Training is positively encouraged, and staff's individual skills and ideas, to further enhance the curriculum, are welcome.
- Parents speak very highly of every aspect of care and learning their children receive at preschool. They state that communication with the staff is very good, and they feel welcome and able to discuss any concerns. Parents comment how quickly their children settle and the good progress they make, especially with language development. Parents say that staff 'go above and beyond' what is expected and highly recommend the preschool.
- Staff engage children in meaningful conversation. They are skilful in posing questions and allow children time to think and respond. Children are confident and engage with their friends in their play. They communicate well and have good language skills. For example, children transport toys from around the garden to set up home near a picnic table. They discuss a 'plan' of what they are going to do next. They decide they need to dig holes and need a 'dumper truck' and 'excavator'.
- Children's mathematical development is progressing well. The preschool is rich in numbers, shapes and mathematical opportunities. For example, children

measure in the construction area. They wear high visibility jackets and hard hats as they use the large weighing scales to compare the weight of different types of bricks. Children giggle at the water play as they measure and count the amount of water needed to fill a jug.

- All children make good progress. Staff are very knowledgeable of their individual needs. This includes children who require additional support or who speak English as an additional language. Activities are provided with a precise focus on supporting each child's unique needs. The children settle well, feel safe and secure and enjoy their time at preschool.
- Children's behaviour is very good overall. Staff have high expectations for all children attending, and children understand what is acceptable. They are kind to one another. Children are positively encouraged to negotiate together to find a solution to a problem, for example when taking turns and sharing resources. The session runs seamlessly throughout the morning, and children are engrossed in their play. However, they quickly lose concentration and are easily distracted when the group comes together at home time. Some children find it difficult to concentrate and sit still and disturb the singing or story session for those who want to participate.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The manager and her staff demonstrate a secure understanding of how to keep children safe. They are clear about the procedure to follow should they have a concern regarding a child's well-being. Completion of regular safeguarding training, including wider aspects of child protection, is a priority to ensure all staff are confident and have a good knowledge of how to protect children. Staff educate and support children to understand how to keep themselves safe and take managed risks through well-planned activities. A robust recruitment policy ensures children are cared for by staff who understand their role and responsibilities and are suitable to do so.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- support staff to engage children and help them to remain focused during large group activities.

Setting details

Unique reference number	2522409
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10208137
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register
Day care type	Sessional day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	2 to 4
Total number of places	22
Number of children on roll	26
Name of registered person	Jackson, Diane
Registered person unique reference number	2522408
Telephone number	07967012365
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

The Playpen Preschool was registered in 2019. It employs six members of childcare staff, all of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 2 and above. The preschool opens from 9.15am to 12.15pm Monday to Friday, during term time only. The preschool provides funded early education for two- and three-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Lynn Hartigan

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the setting has received 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 preschool.
- The manager showed the inspector around the areas that children access. They discussed how staff organise the preschool and plan the curriculum and experiences for children.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation with the preschool manager.
- The inspector held discussions with staff, children and parents at appropriate times during the inspection.
- The inspector looked at a sample of the preschool's documents. This included evidence about staff's suitability and training.

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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