

Inspection of Little Friends Pre-School

Deneholm Cp School, Culford Road, GRAYS, Essex RM16 2SS

Inspection date: 23 May 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 are happy and confident, and feel secure in their relationships with staff. They are eager to explore, experiment and be imaginative. Children embrace the language-rich environment and talk to their peers with confidence. They ask questions, are curious and enjoy the opportunity to share their learning with staff. Children eagerly talk about what they are doing and make links in their learning. For example, children making a bed for the farm animals talk about the animals sleeping and needing to keep warm, and ask for everyone to be quiet. Children work together with the support of staff to manage their own behaviour. They follow their own interests and have freedom to explore in a safe environment.

Children explore the outdoors with energy and enthusiasm. They show high levels of engagement in creative activities. Children enjoy being in the outdoor area, which is well-resourced and engaging. There is a wide range of opportunities for messy play, including digging mud, mixing herbs and planting seeds. Children experiment with combining sand and water, practising, adapting and exploring effects of change. Children's development is enhanced by enjoyable learning and a positive atmosphere. They make good levels of progress in relation to their starting points. Staff encourage and support children to succeed.

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

- The management team supports a strong ethos within the pre-school. Staff's well-being is recognised as important, and the team feel valued in their roles. They have individual training plans and leaders encourage them to extend their qualifications. Staff have regular in-house training courses and share their new learning with the team. Children benefit from staff being good role models.
- The support for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities is good. Children have individual learning plans and are supported by knowledgeable staff. The special educational needs coordinator works closely with professionals who visit the pre-school to support children's needs and the practice of staff. Children make good progress from their starting points and develop skills for future learning potential.
- Partnership with parents is a strength of the pre-school. Staff and parents communicate together effectively to support continuity of children's care and learning. The staff share information about children's learning and how parents can further support their children at home. Parents are happy with the care their children receive and the relationships they have with staff.
- Children benefit from a well-resourced learning environment. However, the organisation of resources does not always make it easy for children to choose, so that they can extend their play.
- Staff encourage children to be independent in washing hands and getting ready

for outdoor play. However, staff do not make the most of every opportunity to enable children to develop their independence even further. For example, the milk jugs are too large for children to manage pouring their own drinks.

- Children have lots of opportunities to practise mark making and writing through role play. This helps children develop early writing skills. For example, a small group of children playing at a 'doctor's surgery' use paper and pencils to write prescriptions for each other. Staff model how writing is used for a purpose. They understand how to extend children's learning through asking questions during play.
- Children enjoy a rich curriculum with wider experiences and opportunities to enhance their learning. Staff carefully plan an activity from children's interests at home to extend and encourage further curiosity. Children squeal with delight, observing as their volcanoes overflow with bubbly lava. They ask to repeat the activity again and again. Staff follow children's lead, exposing children to new words to widen their vocabulary. These well-planned activities provide exciting, unique learning experiences.
- Children make good progress in relation to their starting points. They develop good levels of self-confidence and an enjoyment of learning. Children gain the key skills they need to be ready for school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff have a good knowledge of safeguarding and the procedures to report any concerns they may have about children in their care. They keep their safeguarding knowledge up to date through regular training. Safeguarding is embedded in practice. Staff talk about current safeguarding issues, such as county lines, recognising signs of possible abuse and how to support vulnerable children. The management team are committed to safer recruitment to ensure staff are suitable for their role. Staff carry out risk assessments to check the environment is safe. They identify any potential hazards and make changes if needed to assure children's welfare.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- offer more challenge for children to encourage them to do as much as possible for themselves and help them to be highly independent
- review the organisation of the indoor environment to enable children to extend their play and learning further.

Setting details

Unique reference number	2539618
Local authority	Thurrock
Inspection number	10233424
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	24
Number of children on roll	43
Name of registered person	Little Friends Pre-School Partnership
Registered person unique reference number	RP521737
Telephone number	01375 486 019
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

Little Friends Pre-School registered in 2019. The pre-school employs nine members of childcare staff. Of these, one holds an appropriate early years qualification at level 2, four at level 3 and three at level 4. The pre-school opens from Monday to Friday, term time only. Sessions are from 9am until 3.30pm. The pre-school provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Helen Clutterham

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the setting 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 setting.
- The manager and the inspector completed a learning walk together of all areas of the pre-school and discussed the early years curriculum.
- The inspector observed the interactions between staff and children.
- 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 manager and the inspector discussed an observation and how the curriculum had been implemented and the impact that this had on children's learning.
- The inspector spoke to several parents during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The manager provided the inspector with a sample of key documentation on request.

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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