

# Inspection of The Friary Pre-School

Chapter House, Carmelite Way, Maldon CM9 5FX

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Inspection date: 19 May 2023

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

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The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Outstanding

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

### **The provision is good**

Children excitedly arrive at pre-school and leave their parents with ease. They show curiosity and eagerness to learn and are keen to investigate the activities provided. Children demonstrate they are comfortable and feel safe in the child-friendly, familiar environment. They relish their time outdoors and engage in play with their friends. They have established close bonds with all the staff, who speak knowledgeably about the children attending. It is evident through conversation 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 and a varied curriculum around children's interests and what they need to learn next.

Children demonstrate good independence skills, as these are positively encouraged. For example, they put their own coats and boots on in preparation for playing outdoors. They help prepare their snack as they butter toast and use tongs with skill to select vegetable sticks and fruit. Children can initiate their own play and learning as resources are accessible to them. Their creativity and early writing skills are fully supported throughout. For example, they spend time at adult-led activities, as they practise cutting using scissors and making collages and masks. They have access to writing materials and are encouraged to write their names on their creations.

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

- Children benefit from a broad and ambitious curriculum. Staff use initial assessments well and know what the children need to learn next. They positively follow children's own interests when planning activities. Staff challenge children's thinking. For example, when children find snails in a play tunnel, they are encouraged to think of how to care for the snail and where it could live safely. They study the creature with fascination and recall what they have learned, as they tell visitors to the setting that snails hide in their shell when they are scared.
- The manager demonstrates a commitment to providing all 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 are welcomed to further enhance the curriculum. Staff speak with enthusiasm about their roles.
- The well-established key-person system in place promotes children's emotional security. All children, including those who require additional support, settle quickly and confidently engage in activities. Children show fascination and sustained levels of concentration as they plan to make a water park. They work

together and drag water in a barrel to where they want it, and giggle as it spills. Staff are very skilful in their intervention as they make gentle suggestions as to how this may work. They ask if children might need their wellington boots to keep their feet dry. Staff introduce new words, such as 'tidal waves', to broaden their vocabulary.

- Staff invest time in getting to know the children and their family. They encourage the two-way flow of information with parents, who share what they know about their children. Parents speak positively about the care and education provided for their children. They welcome the home activities and ideas to continue learning at home. Parents comment that 'the amazing staff go above and beyond their expectations', and that they feel fully supported. They speak of their gratitude for 'the superb effort and support' they receive.
- Children's behaviour is good overall. Staff have high expectations for children attending, and children understand what is acceptable. The session runs seamlessly throughout the morning, and children are engrossed in their play. However, some quickly lose concentration and are distracted when the group comes together at lunchtime. Some children find it difficult to concentrate and sit still and disturb the session for those who want to participate.
- All children make good progress. This includes children who require additional support. The pre-school's special educational needs coordinator is very knowledgeable and experienced. The setting is inclusive, and children receive the support they need to enjoy a meaningful day. Professional but friendly relationships have been established with the parents and outside agencies, to ensure that they are informed and fully involved in the education and support provided for their children.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

All staff members demonstrate a secure understanding of how to keep children safe. They are clear about the procedures 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 that all staff are confident and have a good knowledge of how to protect children. This includes the process for whistle-blowing. Staff educate children to help them understand how to keep themselves safe and take managed risks through well-planned activities outdoors. A robust recruitment policy ensures that 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 and when preparing for lunchtime.

## Setting details

|  |                                    |
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| <b>Unique reference number</b>                     | EY491964                           |
| <b>Local authority</b>                             | Essex                              |
| <b>Inspection number</b>                           | 10285733                           |
| <b>Type of provision</b>                           | Childcare on non-domestic premises |
| <b>Registers</b>                                   | Early Years 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>                      | 16                                 |
| <b>Number of children on roll</b>                  | 33                                 |
| <b>Name of registered person</b>                   | Essex County Council               |
| <b>Registered person unique reference number</b>   | RP901507                           |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                            | 033301 32628                       |
| <b>Date of previous inspection</b>                 | 16 October 2017                    |

## Information about this early years setting

The Friary Pre-School in Maldon, Essex registered in 2015. The pre-school employs eight members of childcare staff. Of these, all hold an appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 and above. The pre-school opens from 9am until 3pm Monday to Friday, during term time. The pre-school 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 pre-school has received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the manager and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the setting.
- The manager and the inspector completed a learning walk together and discussed the curriculum and what it is that the team want the children to learn.
- 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 carried out a joint observation together.
- The inspector spoke with staff and children at the inspection.
- Parents provided the inspector with verbal and written feedback.
- The inspector looked at relevant documentation and evidence of the suitability of staff working in the pre-school.

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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