

Inspection of Little Dunmow's Pre-School

Great Dunmow Leisure Centre, Parsonage Downs, Dunmow CM6 2AT

Inspection date: 6 December 2023

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 arrive happy and excited to start their day at the pre-school. Staff greet children by name and engage enthusiastically in discussions with them. This helps children to settle quickly and feel valued. Children develop positive relationships with the caring and nurturing staff, helping them to feel safe. Staff provide a stimulating learning environment that supports children's interests. Children are keen to explore and seek out their friends to join in with their play. They show high levels of curiosity, concentration and enjoyment as they play and learn.

Staff have high expectations for children's behaviour. They are good role models and have a consistent approach to managing behaviour. Children behave well. They are polite, listen to others, take turns, and share the resource. Children develop good communication skills. They readily engage in conversations and demonstrate their growing vocabulary as they confidently share their thoughts and ideas with staff and each other.

Children have plenty of opportunities to learn and play outside. Staff encourage children to challenge themselves as they climb, jump and balance. Staff praise their efforts and children smile with pride. This helps to develop children's physical skills and promotes their confidence. Children strengthen their small hand muscles as they use spoons and forks to dig and scoop mud and flower petals into pots.

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

- The provider, who is also the manager, is dedicated and highly ambitious. She is a strong leader and works closely with her enthusiastic staff team to continually develop the provision and provide high quality care and education for all children. Staff know children very well. They provide a broad curriculum that reflects children's ongoing emerging needs and development. The staff team invest time getting to know families well to help them understand about children's backgrounds and their lives at home. They share information and advice, and parents advise that staff 'go over and above' to support them.
- Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported well. The knowledgeable special educational needs coordinator is confident in her role. She works effectively with parents, staff, and other external professionals to ensure that children swiftly get the help they need. Support is put in place to help children work towards achievable targets. This helps children make good progress in their development.
- Staff support children's communication and language skills effectively. They encourage children to engage in back-and-forth conversations, showing genuine interest in what they have to say. Staff model language and introduce new words. Children enjoy listening to stories and looking at books in the cosy book

area. They enthusiastically sing familiar songs and join in with the actions.

- Overall, staff provide an ambitious, well sequenced curriculum and children make good progress. They use observations and assessment to plan opportunities to support children's learning and to help them develop the knowledge and skills to be ready for school. Staff demonstrate good teaching practice. However, at times, staff do not ensure they challenge and extend children's learning as far as possible to help them make the most progress.
- Staff provide effective resources to spike children's imagination, promote their thinking and help them to extend their own play. For example, children concentrate as they pretend to type on keyboards, speak into telephones and carefully wrap dolls in bandages in the 'doctor's surgery'. They chop and prepare real vegetables in the play kitchen, adding additional ingredients, such as rice and pasta that staff provide in jars.
- Parent partnership is strong. Parents say their children are 'enthusiastic to attend' and that staff are 'supportive, caring and professional'. They comment that their children flourish and make good progress. Parents value the regular updates they receive about their children's development and how they can support learning at home. This helps to provide continuity in children's care and learning.
- The provider meets regularly with staff to discuss any concerns they may have and to provide feedback on their practice. She encourages staff to engage with professional development opportunities to enhance their good knowledge and skills further. The provider places a high priority on staff well-being and staff advise they feel supported and enjoy their roles. This promotes a happy atmosphere throughout the pre-school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The provider and staff demonstrate a secure understanding of how to safeguard children. They attend training regularly to keep their knowledge and skills up to date. The staff team know the possible signs and behaviours that may indicate a child is at risk of harm. They know how to respond appropriately to any concerns they may have about the welfare of a child. Staff know the procedure to follow if they have any concerns about the conduct of an adult working at the pre-school. Recruitment procedures are robust to ensure that all staff are suitable to work with children.

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 strengthen their already good teaching skills, to challenge and extend children's learning as far as possible consistently.

Setting details

Unique reference number	2653641
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10308726
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	18
Number of children on roll	31
Name of registered person	Little Dunmow Pre-School Ltd
Registered person unique reference number	2653642
Telephone number	07874091465
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

Dunmow Pre-school registered in 2021 and is situated in Great Dunmow, Essex. The pre-school employs seven members of childcare staff. Of these, four hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 or above, including the provider/manager who is qualified at level 6. The pre-school provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Marisa White

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the provider 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 provider.
- The provider and the inspector completed a learning walk together and discussed the early years curriculum.
- The special educational needs coordinator spoke to the inspector about how they support children with additional needs.
- The inspector observed the quality of education being provided, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact that this was having on children's learning.
- Children and staff spoke to the inspector during the inspection.
- The inspector spoke to several parents and reviewed written testimonials during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The inspector looked at relevant documentation and reviewed 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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