

Inspection of Grove Preschool Stanway

50 New Farm Road, Stanway, Colchester CO3 0PG

Inspection date: 30 June 2025

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. They are greeted with warmth and kindness by the committed staff, who are happy to see them. Children settle quickly at a chosen activity and demonstrate that they are keen and eager to explore the planned activities provided. The team of staff provides children with a variety of fun experiences that capture their interest and cover all seven areas of learning, both indoors and outdoors. The curriculum is planned around careful observations and assessments of the children's developing needs. Staff plan in the moment and follow children's interests, which influences the activities provided but also introduces seasonal themes. For example, children learn about the circus and carnival. They decorate balloons and shakers and use these to join in the singing and celebrations.

There is a strong emphasis on supporting children to develop the skills they need to be independent learners. The effective key-person approach ensures that children form secure attachments and settle well. Time is taken to get to know the child and their family and staff speak knowledgeably of all the children attending. Staff are positive role models to the children, which supports children to develop kindness and empathy. The team has high expectations and praise children for making positive choices, such as when they play well together and help to tidy up. Children understand the expectations and their behaviour is good.

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

- The quality of teaching is good. All children, including those who need additional support, make good progress from their starting points.
- Children demonstrate that they are confident communicators. They happily engage in conversation with visitors to the setting. For example, they carefully choose outfits from the dress up box and proudly twirl in their dresses, explaining they are going to a birthday party and that there will be birthday cake.
- While children are offered a broad curriculum where there is a strong focus on supporting their personal and emotional development and promoting the skills needed to be independent learners, it is not consistently challenging. Therefore, sometimes, staff do not best support the most able children to build on what they already know, and extend their knowledge to an even higher level.
- Children understand the importance of keeping safe and healthy. They know to wash their hands before eating and when they first arrive at pre-school. They are fully supported to take care of their own personal needs. They talk about the need for sun cream and hats when it is hot and the importance of drinking water to keep hydrated.
- Children enjoy the fresh air and space to run outdoors. They engage in planned

activities in the garden. For example, they learn about cause and effect as they excitedly explore what happens to ice in water play. They show amazement at how quickly it melts. They have a wide vocabulary and tell staff it is because the sun is so hot and that it is 'incredible' how it disappears.

- Children have many opportunities to practise early writing skills. For example, hand muscles are strengthened in preparation for pencil control as they manipulate dough. Children use tweezers and tongs in their play to develop their fine motor skills. They access writing materials and concentrate as they make tickets to visit the circus and cinema.
- Parents speak highly of the pre-school and staff. They comment that communication is very good and they feel fully informed and involved in their children's learning. They say the staff are welcoming and friendly and that they are reassured their children are in safe hands.
- The staff work effectively as a team. The session runs seamlessly. Staff understand their roles and responsibilities and say they feel valued. They welcome opportunities to support their own continuous professional development, such as training opportunities, as they understand this has a positive impact on outcomes for children.
- Children access resources and books that reflect similarities and differences. As part of the pre-school ethos, they learn to respect one another. The curriculum provides opportunities for children to learn about different cultures. However, there are fewer opportunities and experiences within the curriculum to support children's knowledge about, and make sense of, the world around them.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts children's interests first.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- plan more opportunities within the curriculum to challenge children's thinking to consistently build on what they already know and can do
- provide more opportunities within the curriculum for children to learn and understand the wider world and community in which they live.

Setting details

Unique reference number	2735046
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10398409
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	20
Number of children on roll	39
Name of registered person	Grove Pre-School (Stanway)
Registered person unique reference number	RP523790
Telephone number	07443966478
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

Grove Preschool Stanway registered in 2023. The pre-school employs seven members of childcare staff. Of these, six hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3. The pre-school opens Monday to Friday, during school term time. Sessions are from 9am to 3pm. The pre-school provides government funded early education for all eligible children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Lynn Hartigan

Inspection activities

- The manager showed the inspector around the areas that children access.
- They discussed how staff organise the environment and plan the curriculum and experiences for children.
- The inspector and manager carried out a joint observation.
- The inspector held discussions with staff, children and parents at appropriate times during the inspection.
- The inspector looked at a sample of documents, which included evidence about staff's suitability and training.
- The inspector observed the quality of teaching during activities, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact this has on children's learning.

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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