

# Inspection of Tots and Scholars Borehamwood

299 Shenley Road, Borehamwood WD6 1TH

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Inspection date: 29 September 2025

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
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The quality of education

**Outstanding**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Outstanding**

Personal development

**Outstanding**

Leadership and management

**Outstanding**

Overall effectiveness at previous  
inspection

Not applicable

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

### **The provision is outstanding**

Children thrive in this exceptional nursery. The highly skilled staff team deliver a curriculum that is clear, well sequenced and firmly rooted in the specific learning needs of children. They provide a rich balance of activities which consistently engage and inspire children. Staff ensure that children's interests are reflected in the environment. For example, children explore real vegetables as they pretend to make autumn soup. Staff play alongside children, introducing new words such as, 'mixing', focusing their interactions sharply to extend communication and language. Children show sustained engagement and high levels of motivation.

Children's behaviour is exemplary. They consistently show respect for their peers and staff, who act as outstanding role models. Children take turns, listen attentively, and demonstrate high levels of patience during group activities. For example, as children explore an ostrich egg, they gently pass it around the group. Children learn about incubation and the process of hatching, linking scientific knowledge to hands-on exploration.

Staff actively promote children's voices, embedding democracy into daily practice by offering meaningful choice. Children play an active role in learning how to keep themselves safe and contribute to daily life at the nursery. Staff skilfully include children in risk assessments, enabling them to identify hazards and make their own judgements about risk. This gives them a strong sense of purpose and sense of belonging.

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

- Transitions are managed exceptionally well across the nursery. Staff offer carefully considered settling-in sessions, taking time to understand each child's needs and supporting families to feel confident. Children moving on to school are exceptionally well prepared. The nursery focuses on building the skills children need for the next stage of their education. Parents are offered detailed workshops to help them understand how to prepare their child, and a dedicated classroom helps children adjust to the school environment. Children make rapid progress in early literacy, recognising letters and sounds and confidently identify their names. Staff weave mathematics throughout the curriculum, ensuring children see numbers represented in their play and practise counting routinely.
- Leaders are highly effective in developing staff potential, creating a wealth of opportunities for staff to grow and take on new responsibilities. Staff receive focused training and ongoing supervision that is highly supportive, enabling them to build their skills and practice further. The drive for continual improvement is embedded in all aspects of leadership. They use a range of reflective tools to celebrate successes and set out ambitious goals for further

development. This culture of evaluation and aspiration supports the nursery to continually evolve and provide the very best outcomes for children.

- The nursery makes extensive use of the local community to broaden children's experiences and deepen their understanding of the world around them. Purposeful trips reflect children's interests and learning needs. For example, children use the train, visit local restaurants, pet shops and pharmacies, and explore the natural world during woodland walks. Staff skilfully build on these experiences when back in the nursery, helping children to consolidate and extend their learning.
- The outdoor environment across the nursery provides rich opportunities for exploration and physical development. Children navigate obstacle courses that strengthen coordination and core strength. Staff respond sensitively to children's emerging interests. For example, they have developed a construction site role-play area in the garden, where children wear hard hats and high-visibility jackets, and stack bricks with foam 'cement'.
- Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are exceptionally well supported at the nursery. Staff work proactively with families and a wide range of external professionals to address emerging gaps in children's development. Important information is shared promptly, ensuring staff remain fully informed of children's changing needs. Bespoke support plans identify targeted strategies that enable children to make the best possible progress from their starting points.
- Partnerships with parents are exceptionally strong. Parents feel fully involved in their child's learning and value the many opportunities to contribute to their development. Parents enjoy excellent relationships with their child's key person and take part in a wide range of nursery events, such as Grandparents' Day and cultural celebrations, which foster a strong sense of community. Parents are kept up to date with their child's progress through regular parent evenings and an online platform.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

## Setting details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	2744251
<b>Local authority</b>	Hertfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10416806
<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>	0 to 4
<b>Total number of places</b>	140
<b>Number of children on roll</b>	57
<b>Name of registered person</b>	Tots And Scholars Limited
<b>Registered person unique reference number</b>	RP905047
<b>Telephone number</b>	07501218646
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not applicable

## Information about this early years setting

Tots and Scholars registered in 2023. The nursery employs 18 members of childcare staff. Of these, 14 hold early years qualifications at level 2 or above. The nursery opens from 7:30am until 6.30pm, all year round, except for bank holidays and one week at Christmas. The nursery provides funded early education for all eligible children.

## Information about this inspection

### Inspector

Emily Woodhead

## Inspection activities

- The manager and inspector completed a learning walk together of all areas of the setting and discussed the early years curriculum.
- 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 inspector carried out joint observations of activities in the Butterflies and Bumblebee rooms with the manager.
- The inspector talked to staff at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The children communicated with the inspector during the inspection. The inspector spoke with parents and carers during the inspection.
- The inspector looked at relevant documentation, such as evidence of the suitability of the staff working in the nursery and a selection of other records.

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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