

Inspection of Tiddlywinks Preschool

Bishop William Ward School, 22a Coach Road, Great Horkesley, COLCHESTER CO6 4AT

Inspection date:

21 May 2025

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Outstanding

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision requires improvement

Children experience variable levels of support in their play and learning. This means children do not have consistently good opportunities to build on what they know and can do. For example, during play and daily routines, staff do not always support children to develop the vocabulary, listening and speaking skills that the curriculum intends to build at this stage of their learning.

Nevertheless, children settle well on arrival and enjoy their time at the pre-school. They explore the lively environment around them and make choices about what they would like to explore next. For example, pre-school children move freely between the indoor and outside spaces to suit their interests. Staff plan a range of outings in the local community, which helps to widen children's experiences. Children learn about how fruit grows during a visit to a local orchard and take a walk to the local postbox to send some letters.

Staff praise children during activities. This helps to motivate children's positive behaviour and boosts their self-esteem. For example, staff take time to talk to children about their models made from dough and celebrate their achievements with others. Staff are consistently caring and kind towards children. For example, staff provide babies with plenty of comfort and reassurance during daily routines such as eating and sleeping.

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

- Leaders and staff show they understand the needs of children who attend. Staff are aware of the learning intentions of the curriculum. They have a secure awareness of their key children's stages of development and what they want them to learn next.
- Leaders demonstrate that they are aiming to provide high-quality experiences to children. However, they continue to experience challenges with recruitment of staff and have made some recent changes to roles within the management team. This has an impact on the oversight and coaching staff receive to help improve their practice. For example, staff do not receive enough guidance to adapt their interactions in the moment and ensure children remain engaged in activities.
- Children's communication and language development is a central focus of the pre-school's curriculum. However, in practice, staff do not consistently engage children in back-and-forth interactions to help them to learn new words and language structures. At times, the high noise level in the pre-school room also makes it difficult for children to hear and process spoken language. Babies benefit from more focused communication opportunities to encourage their early language development, such as singing, rhymes and signing.

- Leaders and staff work with parents and external professionals to make sure that children with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive appropriate support and funding. They secure additional resources and use them effectively to help children take part in pre-school activities and remain safe.
- Staff help children learn to be responsible and independent. They involve children in tasks such as tidying up and sweeping the floor. During snack and mealtimes, staff also support children to use ceramic plates and teapots and to have a go at using a toaster. This helps children to consider their safety when using everyday equipment.
- Leaders and staff build strong, positive relationships with parents. They take time to talk with families and understand each child's care needs and stage of development before they start at the pre-school. For instance, they gather details about medical conditions, dietary needs and individual interests. This helps ensure a smooth transition from home to pre-school. Parents are kept well informed through regular updates about their child's progress and daily care.
- Thorough checks are completed, both at the point of recruitment and during ongoing supervision meetings with staff. This helps to ensure staff are suitable to work with children. Staff morale is high, and leaders give priority to their well-being. For example, they create initiatives for parents and staff to praise staff members individually for their contribution at the pre-school.

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 meet the requirements of the early years foundation stage, the provider must:

	Due date
develop coaching and mentoring arrangements for the new management team to help strengthen their leadership abilities and ensure effective oversight of the setting	30/07/2025
support staff to improve the delivery of the curriculum for communication and language through consistent, high-quality interactions with children.	30/07/2025

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY424384
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10390081
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	1 to 4
Total number of places	40
Number of children on roll	68
Name of registered person	Tiddlywinks Preschool Gt Horkesley Community Interest Company
Registered person unique reference number	RP902396
Telephone number	01206 272669
Date of previous inspection	29 November 2019

Information about this early years setting

Tiddlywinks Preschool registered in 2011. The pre-school employs 22 members of childcare staff. Of these, 19 hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 2 or above. One member of staff holds qualified teacher status. The pre-school opens for 48 weeks of the year. Sessions are from 8.30am to 5pm on weekdays. The pre-school provides funded early education for all eligible children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Sarah Clements

Inspection activities

- The provider joined the inspector on a learning walk and talked to the inspector about their curriculum and what they want the children to learn.
- The inspector observed the quality of interactions during activities, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact this has on children's learning.
- The deputy manager and inspector jointly observed and evaluated an activity in the pre-school room.
- The inspector talked to staff at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their views.
- Children told the inspector about their friends and what they like to do when they are at pre-school.
- Parents shared their views of the pre-school with the inspector.
- The inspector spoke with the management team about the leadership and management of the pre-school.
- 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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