

Inspection of Great Bardfield Preschool

Great Bardfield Primary School, Braintree Road, Great Bardfield, Braintree CM7 4RN

Inspection date: 17 September 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	Good
--	------

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Staff deliver a highly responsive, child-led curriculum through 'in the moment' planning. They celebrate children's progress with displays of home and setting work, particularly mark making. This motivates children, strengthens fine motor development and gives them pride in their achievements. Whole-group projects, such as autumn displays, extend learning into the home, reinforce contributions and deepen children's sense of community.

Staff prioritise relationships and use strategies, such as the 'Colour Monster' and 'Worry Monster', to support emotional literacy. Children articulate their feelings confidently, feel understood and develop self-regulation skills. Staff are positive role models and set clear expectations for behaviour, which children follow with ease. Children respond promptly to staff's fun strategies, such as raising hands and wiggling fingers at tidy-up time. They listen carefully to instructions and clear away with minimal support, ensuring the environment remains organised for learning. Children develop a sense of responsibility and independence, reinforcing positive behaviour. Personalised name cards with photographs promote early reading. As staff remove photographs, children progress to recognising their names independently, preparing them for school. Staff manage transitions between routines with sensitivity. They guide children calmly from snack to activities, so children feel secure and ready to re-engage in play. Staff encourage children to wait for their turn when activities are busy, and children respond well, demonstrating patience, self-regulation and respect for others.

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

- Staff organise snack and mealtimes calmly and effectively. Children choose from a selection of fruit and confidently decide what they would like to eat. Staff use descriptive language, such as 'juicy' and 'crunchy,' which extends children's vocabulary and encourages them to explore new tastes. Children use their own water bottles, developing healthy hydration habits. However, staff do not provide opportunities for children to prepare, peel or cut fruit, which sometimes limits the development of their independence and self-help skills.
- At lunchtime, children count down together before opening their lunch boxes, promoting group identity and early mathematical skills. However, by removing wrappers for children, staff sometimes limit opportunities to develop independence and extend learning about healthy lifestyles.
- Children engage enthusiastically in activities. They test their ideas, problem solve, and persevere when challenges arise. Staff encourage children patiently, prompting them to 'have another go,' which builds resilience and determination. Children show pride and delight when they succeed, strengthening their confidence and sense of achievement.

- Leaders actively adjust attendance arrangements, allowing children to maintain regular contact with peers and staff. As a result, children do not miss valuable learning opportunities and demonstrate steady progress in their confidence and social development.
- Parents comment that children's confidence has improved significantly with previously shy children now mixing happily with peers. Staff provide nurturing support and implement highly effective settling-in procedures to ease children's anxieties and reassure parents. This sensitive practice strengthens children's emotional security and enables them to form positive attachments quickly.
- Leaders use training and professional development effectively to strengthen curriculum delivery. Staff access courses, appraisal tools and targeted programmes, such as those for maths. Staff implement strategies and resources learned through training, enabling children to experience well-planned activities that extend learning, build confidence and promote resilience.
- The provision maintains exceptionally robust safeguarding and health and safety practices that underpin a secure and nurturing environment for all children. Staff communicate effectively regarding children's whereabouts and needs, deploying themselves strategically to ensure supervision across the setting. Children explore, learn and socialise confidently in this supportive setting.
- Staff interact warmly with children and hold meaningful conversations about home life. Children feel confidence in expressing themselves. One-to-one support is particularly effective for new starters, who benefit from sensory play and reassurance during settling in. Staff explain routines clearly, helping children feel secure.
- Staff work closely with specialists. For example, they introduce tactile markers and adapt resources to ensure all children can access learning. This targeted support allows children to make significant progress from their starting points, preparing them for future transitions.

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 effectively for children to practise their independence and self-help skills, particularly at mealtimes.

Setting details

Unique reference number	203620
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10399834
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Day care type	Sessional day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	2 to 4
Total number of places	40
Number of children on roll	52
Name of registered person	Great Bardfield Pre-School Committee
Registered person unique reference number	RP519140
Telephone number	01371 811580
Date of previous inspection	17 December 2019

Information about this early years setting

Great Bardfield Preschool registered in 1999 and is located in Braintree. The pre-school employs nine members of childcare staff, of whom seven hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 2 or 3. The pre-school opens from Monday to Friday, during term time. Sessions are from 8.50am to 3pm. The pre-school provides funded early education for all eligible children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Laura Paternoster

Inspection activities

- The manager and inspector completed a learning walk together of all areas of the pre-school and discussed the early years curriculum.
- Children told the inspector about their friends and what they like to do when they are at pre-school.
- The inspector talked to staff at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The inspector spoke with the nominated individual about the leadership and management of the pre-school.
- Staff spoke to the inspector about how they support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- 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 and the manager carried out a joint observation of a communication and language activity.
- Parents and grandparents, shared their views of the setting with the inspector.
- The manager showed the inspector documentation to demonstrate the suitability of staff.

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.

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk

This publication is available at <https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2025