

Inspection of Darlin Buds Ltd

Stifford Clays Junior School, Whitmore Avenue, GRAYS, Essex RM16 2ST

Inspection date:

14 July 2025

**The quality and
standards of early
years provision**

**This
inspection**

Met

Previous
inspection

Met

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

This provision meets requirements

Children are happy to see staff when they arrive at the club. The friendly, long-standing staff greet them warmly, which helps them to settle quickly into their play. Older children make their own way to the club. Younger children walk safely to the club accompanied by a familiar member of staff from the host school. Upon arrival, children feel a sense of belonging as they sit at the table ready for the register. They merrily giggle and chat with their peers, who they look forward to seeing. Children say they love making new friends at the club and eating the 'yummy wraps'.

Children love the freedom to let off some steam after school. They enjoy games of football on the school field or taking on the challenge of the adventure trail obstacle course. Children work together alongside staff, who offer them ideas to solve problems as they negotiate the obstacle course. Staff celebrate children's achievements with them, building children's self-esteem. Staff ask children to think about whether something is safe, and what they can do to ensure it stays safe for themselves and their friends. This means children are learning to risk assess environments for themselves.

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

- Children thoroughly enjoy choosing from a wide range of resources, such as board games, art and crafts, construction toys and role-play experiences. These are mostly stored on open shelving that children explore independently. The choice is endless, and children comfortably ask staff when they would like to play with something from the resource cupboard.
- Children show strong and caring attachments they have made to staff, when they invite them to help get their teddy bears ready for a party. Children appreciate the attentive staff and gratefully say, 'thank you', for helping them find accessories to match outfits for their bears.
- The management team and staff have strong and professional links with the host school. The small and consistent management team and staff means children swiftly get to know them. Transitions for children are smooth, especially as some of the staff work at the host school and are already a familiar person to the children. This helps foster children's feelings of security and happiness right from the start.
- The management team ensures the inside and outside environments are safe through daily risk assessments and safety checks. Children with specific dietary or religious needs are meticulously and continually considered.
- Staff provide opportunities for children to develop their independence. They assign manageable tidy-up tasks involving all children to help them be

responsible, regulate their emotions and build independence. Because staff establish consistent daily routines, children become increasingly independent in their self-care skills. For example, children know to wash their hands before eating and after visiting the toilet.

- Sometimes, staff do not always consider further ways to help children think about what resources they may like to play with during planned outdoor play, to enhance their enjoyment and engagement at these times. Nevertheless, children relish their time outdoors. They get plenty of fresh air and exercise during active play outdoors, which supports their overall well-being and physical health.
- Children demonstrate very good behaviour as they play and explore harmoniously together. Older children look out for their younger peers. For example, when a child's shoe slipped off, their older peers assist them to put it back on. Staff praise these kind behaviours, which reinforces children's understanding of expected respectful and positive behaviours at the club.
- Older children independently decide to help staff dry up the plates after snack. This highlights how they are proud to take part in daily routines, such as being 'daily helpers'. Alongside staff, older children's excellent role modelling contributes to the polite manners frequently displayed by the younger children.
- Parents say how the club has significantly complemented their children's emotional well-being and transition to school. Parents express how the nurturing staff go above and beyond to communicate effectively with them. They fondly call it their 'second home'.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY455531
Local authority	Thurrock
Inspection number	10398220
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Day care type	Out-of-school day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	5 to 11
Total number of places	30
Number of children on roll	28
Name of registered person	Darlin Buds Ltd
Registered person unique reference number	RP529172
Telephone number	07915 059506
Date of previous inspection	9 October 2019

Information about this early years setting

Darlin Buds Ltd registered in 2012. The club operates from Monday to Friday, 7.30am to 9am and 3.15pm to 6.30pm, during school term time. There are four members of staff, two of whom hold relevant childcare qualifications at level 3.

Information about this inspection

Inspector
Louisa Taylor

Inspection activities

- The management team and the inspector completed a tour of the club, both indoors and outdoors, to understand how the play environment is organised. Additionally, the management team discussed how they ensure the premises are safe and suitable.
- The inspector had several discussions with the management team to explore how the club is led and managed. The inspector spoke to staff at appropriate times during the inspection.
- Children spoke with the inspector during the inspection. Parents, carers and teachers from the host school shared their views of the club with the inspector.
- The inspector held a meeting with the management team. The inspector looked at relevant documentation, such as evidence of the suitability of the staff working in the club 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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