

Inspection of Elmtree Preschool

Cotham Gardens Primary School', 19 Elmgrove Road, Redland, Bristol BS6 6AJ

Inspection date: 30 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	Not applicable

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Leaders have devised a curriculum that places focus on the prime areas of learning. This helps children to develop good foundations for their future learning. As soon as children arrive, they keenly explore the activities on offer. Children develop their hand strength as they practise using the scissors to cut various craft materials. Younger children play alongside older children in the role play area, creating scenarios in their play. For example, they pretend to rock the babies to sleep and say, 'Shh, my baby is sleeping.' Outside, children develop their hand-eye coordination as they pour and empty water from various-sized containers. Children benefit from opportunities in their daily routine to develop their communication. For instance, staff use nappy times to talk to children and introduce new concepts, including 'fast' and 'slow'. Older children engage in back-and-forth conversations with staff, and younger children enjoy talking about their new slippers.

Staff spend time building, nurturing and creating trusting relationships with children. Children feel safe and secure. When minor conflicts occur, staff help children to learn about positive behaviours, such as turn taking. Leaders have implemented a new 'buddy system' to ensure that children's needs are met consistently when other familiar staff are absent. Staff are good role models and offer praise and encouragement to children. Children gain self-confidence and develop a strong sense of belonging.

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

- Leaders and staff know children well and plan fun activities based on children's individual interests. Outside, children engage in mark making as they paint the fence with water. Others dig in the sand and make pretend ice creams. Leaders ensure that children have free-flow access between the indoor and outdoor spaces. This positively impacts those children who prefer to learn outside. Children make good progress in their learning.
- Staff gather detailed information from parents to help them understand children's interests. Leaders have recently introduced a new section in the 'All About Me' forms to capture a deeper understanding of children's heritage. This helps staff to create robust starting points for children. Regular assessment and monitoring of children's development supports staff to identify any gaps in their learning. This ensures that children receive the support they need.
- Children develop good attention and listening skills. They enjoy listening to stories and joining in with songs and rhymes. Staff link activities to the 'focus story'. For example, children explore the book 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar' through various props. This helps children to develop a love of books. However, although staff plan activities that are age-appropriate, at times, they do not provide enough challenge to fully extend children's learning.

- Staff introduce mathematical language, such as 'bigger' and 'smaller'. Children begin to develop their awareness of size. However, the curriculum for mathematics is not as strong as other areas of learning. This means that, although children acquire some mathematics skills incidentally, staff do not provide children with opportunities to develop their early counting and number skills through their play.
- Children benefit from a wide range of learning opportunities, helping to develop their understanding of the world and their local community. Children enjoy walks, take small trips on the train and visit the theatre. They excitedly recall these as they look through photo books containing pictures of previous trips out. This helps children to embed their learning experiences. Leaders ensure that they expose children to culture and diversity. For example, children explore traditional cookbooks as they role play. This helps children to develop their awareness of similarities and differences.
- New staff have benefited from a thorough induction period, and they understand their roles and responsibilities well. Overall, leaders have clear arrangements in place for staff supervision, which help to promote positive outcomes for children. However, leaders recognise that some newer staff require further opportunities to build on their confidence of delivering the curriculum to the highest level.
- Parents speak highly of the nursery and praise the 'warm and compassionate' staff team. They feel well informed of their children's progress. Parents comment on the positive progression their children have made. They value the regular opportunities to attend various events, such as open days, cream teas and graduation ceremonies. Leaders welcome parents' views, and they complete regular surveys. This helps leaders to enhance the provision they offer, positively impacting children and their families.

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:

- ensure that the planning and delivery of activities for children provide sufficient challenge to sustain their engagement
- further strengthen the curriculum for mathematics to promote children's counting and use of number during their play
- continue to help newer staff develop a deeper understanding of the curriculum to enable them to deliver it more effectively.

Setting details

Unique reference number	2858305
Local authority	Bristol City of
Inspection number	10420936
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	2 to 4
Total number of places	21
Number of children on roll	13
Name of registered person	Elmtree Preschool
Registered person unique reference number	2725507
Telephone number	07412323230
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

Elmtree Preschool re-registered in September 2025. It is located in the city of Bristol and offers provision for children between the hours of 8.40am and 3.15pm, Monday to Thursday, term time only. The setting employs seven members of childcare staff. Of these, one holds early years teacher status, three hold a relevant level 3 qualification, and there are three unqualified staff members. The setting offers government-funded places.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Chelsea Woollard

Inspection activities

- The manager 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 and the manager observed the quality of teaching and carried out a joint observation.
- Parents shared their views with the inspector.
- The inspector observed children's activities and staff's teaching, indoors and outdoors.
- The inspector spoke to staff at convenient times and assessed their safeguarding knowledge.
- The special educational needs coordinator spoke to the inspector about how they support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- A meeting was held between the inspector and the management team to discuss leadership.
- The inspector looked at relevant documentation and reviewed evidence of the suitability of staff working in the nursery.

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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