

Inspection of NGCA Ducklings Pre-School

Community Centre, Notley Green, Great Notley, BRAINTREE, Essex CM77 7US

Inspection date: 30 September 2025

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children enter the setting eager to explore and quickly engage in activities. Staff greet them warmly. They have a strong understanding of each child, which helps them to feel safe and valued. Children know the daily routines. They begin to recognise their name labels to independently register themselves. New children settle well and form trusting relationships with staff, who provide a secure and nurturing environment. Staff are kind, attentive and responsive. This supports children's confidence, happiness and emotional well-being.

Children develop well in this friendly and welcoming pre-school setting. They form close and trusting bonds with caring staff, who know each child and their family well. As a result, children feel safe and confident, and ready to engage in their learning. Children make good progress from their individual starting points in development. Staff plan a curriculum and a wide range of play-based activities that build on children's interests and support their learning effectively.

Staff consistently promote positive behaviour. Children understand what is expected of them, including sharing, taking turns and using polite manners. Children play well together and independently, respecting boundaries and routines. For example, during a session with dough and music, children sit on their carpet spots and follow instructions carefully. They squeeze, roll and pass play dough around their bodies while moving to the rhythm of the music. As a result, children develop concentration, self-control and the skills needed for structured learning and effective social interactions.

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

- Staff work closely with parents and carers to support children's learning and development. Key persons gather detailed information when children start, including what they already know, can do and the areas where they need extra support. This helps staff to provide tailored care and learning experiences that support children's progress.
- Parents value the care their children receive and feel that staff understand each child's individual needs. Communication is regular and clear, this keeps parents informed about their children's progress and the next steps in their learning.
- Leaders promote children's interest in reading. Children enjoy sharing stories with staff. They are fully engaged as staff bring books to life through expressive and animated reading. Staff support children to read at home, with all children taking home a book bag each week. This develops children's love of books, listening skills and confidence in early literacy.
- Overall, leaders provide an engaging and practical curriculum that reflects the interests and needs of children. For example, in the mud kitchen, children

explore coloured water, use large pump containers and create imaginative smoothies and birthday cakes. However, on some occasions, planning does not always clearly identify precise next steps or targets, particularly for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This does not consistently enhance the good progress that children make.

- Staff support children's communication and language development through singing and conversations throughout the day. However, there are times when staff do not fully extend children's learning, which means some children are not always fully engaged or encouraged to explore their ideas further.
- Children develop their independence and follow familiar daily routines. Younger children learn by observing and spending time with their older peers. They have opportunities to make choices, manage their toileting needs, put on their shoes and aprons and serve themselves at mealtimes. As a result, children gain confidence, self-help skills and a sense of responsibility for their own learning and care.
- Staff promote healthy lifestyles by giving children daily opportunities to play outdoors, enjoy fresh air and take part in physical activities that support their well-being. For example, children explore the role-play building site, balance along logs and ride wheeled toys. This helps children to develop coordination, strength and confidence in their physical abilities.
- Leaders ensure that staff complete all mandatory training and participate in regular supervision meetings. This supports them to reflect on their practice and identify training needs. It also helps staff to remain skilled, confident and effective in promoting children's safety and learning.

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:

- enhance strategies for monitoring and planning for children's progress, particularly for those children with SEND, to help them to consistently enhance the good progress that children make
- develop the quality of staff's interactions with children to help them to consistently extend children's learning more effectively as they play.

Setting details

Unique reference number	203565
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10407380
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	20
Number of children on roll	41
Name of registered person	Notley Green Community Association Committee
Registered person unique reference number	RP911140
Telephone number	07846 828464
Date of previous inspection	7 January 2020

Information about this early years setting

NGCA Ducklings Pre-School registered in 1995 and is located in Essex. The setting employs 10 members of childcare staff. Of these, six staff have appropriate early years qualifications. The setting opens from Monday to Friday, during term time. Sessions are from 9am to 3.30pm. The setting provides government funded childcare.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Keiley Pedro

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed the quality of education, indoors and outdoors, and considered the impact on children's learning.
- Staff spoke to the inspector at appropriate times during the inspection and the inspector took account of their views.
- The inspector and the manager carried out a joint inspection of an activity.
- Staff spoke to the inspector about how they support children with SEND.
- Parents shared their views of the setting with the inspector during the inspection.
- Leaders showed the inspector relevant documentation to review the suitability of staff working at the setting.

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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