

Inspection of Owl Pre-School

Shears Green Infant School, Packham Road, Northfleet, GRAVESEND, Kent DA11 7JF

Inspection date: 23 September 2025

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good
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What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children are happy, safe and settled. They arrive confidently and quickly engage in play. Staff know children well and plan activities around their interests. This keeps children motivated and helps them enjoy learning.

Children behave well. They make choices in play and show independence in daily routines. They build strong relationships with staff and chat confidently with unfamiliar adults. Staff respond quickly to children's needs and offer a nurturing approach.

Children benefit from a rich and stimulating environment. They have access to farm animals and take part in seasonal experiences, such as hatching chicks and watching them grow. These opportunities spark curiosity and deepen children's understanding of the world.

The setting is well connected to the local community. Children enjoy visits from the police and fire services, which help them learn about people who help us and build their sense of belonging. Strong links with local schools help children feel confident and well prepared for starting school.

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

- Leaders encourage staff to take the lead on curriculum areas they are passionate about. This contributes to strong morale and a shared approach to practice. For example, a communication and language lead supports colleagues to strengthen practice in this area. This enables staff to support children with their communication and language skills.
- Staff deliver a curriculum that supports all areas of learning. They plan activities that build on children's interests and starting points. As a result, children are engaged and make progress across all areas of learning.
- Children with emerging special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are identified early. Staff work closely with families and professionals to provide tailored support. This helps children stay focused and make good progress.
- Staff support children who speak English as an additional language well. They use bilingual strategies and tailored interactions to help children settle and develop their communication skills. This helps children feel secure and make progress in their language development.
- Staff promote language development well. They model vocabulary and encourage children to express themselves through conversation, storytelling and play. This supports communication across all areas of learning.
- Children show positive attitudes to learning. They make choices in play, follow routines and show independence. They are confident and curious learners who

enjoy exploring their environment.

- Children benefit from meaningful experiences that develop their understanding of the world. They observe animals on site, take part in seasonal projects such as hatching chicks, and engage with the local community through visits from the police and fire services. These opportunities help to prepare them for life in modern Britain.
- Staff receive regular supervision and targeted training. Leaders give clear feedback and recognise strengths in teaching. However, teaching is not yet consistently strong across the whole team. Some staff do not extend children's thinking and learning. This means that children's progress is not consistently strong in all areas of learning.
- Parents and carers speak positively about the setting. They appreciate regular communication through online platforms, newsletters and daily handovers. They value the strong relationships staff build with children and families. Parents say that their children enjoy attending and gain the skills they need for 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 further improve the quality of the early years provision, the provider should:

- strengthen the quality of teaching across the staff team so that children consistently benefit from opportunities to extend their thinking and deepen their learning.

Setting details

Unique reference number	127430
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10407995
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register
Day care type	Sessional day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	2 to 4
Total number of places	29
Number of children on roll	54
Name of registered person	The Owl Pre-School
Registered person unique reference number	RP522684
Telephone number	01474 331777
Date of previous inspection	23 January 2020

Information about this early years setting

Owl Pre-School registered in 1976. It is situated in the grounds of Shears Green Infant School in Northfleet, Kent. The pre-school is open from Monday to Friday, from 8.45am to 11.45am and from 12.30pm to 3.30pm, term time only, and offers care for children between the ages of two and five years. The setting employs 13 members of childcare staff. One has an early years qualification at level 7 and 10 staff members hold a qualification at level 3. The setting provides funded early education for children between the ages of two and five years.

Information about this inspection

Inspector
Lauren Mills

Inspection activities

- Leaders joined the inspector on a learning walk and talked about the curriculum and what they want the children to learn.
- The inspector observed the quality of education being provided, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact on the children's learning.
- The inspector spoke to staff about how they support children with SEND.
- The inspector and the manager carried out a joint observation of child-led play and discussed how staff support children's learning through their interests and interactions.
- The inspector spoke to the children to find out about their time at the setting.
- The inspector spoke to several parents and took account of their views.
- The inspector reviewed documentation and checked the suitability of staff working in the setting.
- The inspector spoke to the nominated individual/registered individual about the leadership and management of the setting.
- The inspector looked at relevant documentation and reviewed evidence of the suitability of staff working in 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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