

Inspection of Dolphins Pre School

The Pavilion, Nevill Playing Fields, Off Eridge Road, Hove BN3 7QD

Inspection date: 18 June 2025

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Outstanding

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is outstanding

The support and care that children receive is exceptional and they flourish at the pre-school. Staff are attuned to the needs of all children and work incredibly hard to provide a stimulating, bespoke curriculum that covers all areas of learning. Leaders have developed a unique early reading scheme and they enthusiastically encourage children to enjoy mathematical problems. As a result, children excel in literacy and maths. Children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are given appropriate support which helps them to make excellent progress in their learning and development. Staff are skilful and consistently help children to identify and manage their feelings. They treat children with the utmost respect which positively impacts the way children treat each other, staff and the resources.

The environment is calm and well-managed. Staff effectively find unique ways, such as music sessions to support children's listening and attention skills. Children demonstrate deep levels of engagement at all times. The standard of teaching across the entire staff team is excellent. As a result, all children make rapid progress in their learning and development. Children are supported to expand their vocabulary and develop their communication skills. Staff are aware that children need confidence in order to be able to speak in front of others or to ask for help if needed. Consequently, staff work extremely hard to build children's self-esteem and confidence in ways which are meaningful and have a lasting impact.

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

- Leaders and staff work closely with outside professionals to ensure all children, including children with SEND, receive the support they need. They have a strong vision for the pre-school, and every child's unique character is nurtured. Staff ensure all children receive excellent care to help them feel respected and supported. This helps them to achieve their full potential. Leaders act with integrity to secure funding for children who most need it. This helps to ensure that outcomes for all children are excellent.
- Leaders demonstrate a passion for early education. They are committed to every family they have contact with, consistently going 'above and beyond' to make a positive difference. Leaders mention that the pre-school's biggest asset is the hard-working staff, and they endeavour to support them both in their work and home lives. Staff mention that the pre-school is a very special place and that they feel privileged to work for a leadership team who hold them in such high regard.
- Staff-led activities are implemented extremely well. Children are developing impressive skills in maths, literacy and science. Staff create a sense of awe and wonder in children who are consistently motivated to anticipate what may happen next. Children delight in every aspect of their day. They demonstrate

impeccable behaviour and staff model this well. Children are encouraged to develop autonomy as they write and help implement the rules of the pre-school. They aspire for their name to be added to the 'kindness tree'.

- Children develop an excellent understanding of what it means to be fit and healthy. Staff have developed a unique programme of exercise which involves a 'Daily Mile' before lunch. Children and staff take part in this enjoyable daily exercise around the adjoining sports field. Staff also provide fun incentives to encourage parents to become healthy and, if they can, to walk their children to the pre-school. Leaders invite professionals, such as dentists, to talk to children about the importance of good oral health.
- Leaders are passionate about including parents in children's learning. They provide a high level of quality information on how to support children's learning at home. Staff understand the pressures that parents face in modern day Britain. They offer continuous support, guidance and advice on aspects, such as children's toilet training, diet and how to manage tricky behaviours. Parents mention that the pre-school has overwhelmingly and positively affected their lives and the lives of their children. They feedback that their children are extremely well-prepared for school.
- Children are extremely confident in the pre-school environment. Staff ensure that children are given responsibilities, such as older children routinely explaining a visual timetable to younger children. Children are very independent and take control of their own play. For example, even very young children use sand timers when waiting to have a turn on the tree-swing. The need for adult intervention to manage children's behaviour is rare. Children are supported to develop ways in which to regulate how they feel. The calm environment, purposeful music sessions and breathing techniques allow children to demonstrate an exceptionally high level of maturity beyond their age and stage of development.

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	130680
Local authority	Brighton and Hove
Inspection number	10399293
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	2 to 4
Total number of places	30
Number of children on roll	29
Name of registered person	Gavan, Sheila Nigella
Registered person unique reference number	RP511797
Telephone number	01273 500 513
Date of previous inspection	26 November 2019

Information about this early years setting

Dolphins Pre School registered in 1994. It is located in Hove, East Sussex. The pre-school is open each weekday from 8.45am to 3pm during term time only. They provide government funded early education places for children aged from two to four years. There are 10 staff, nine of whom hold relevant childcare qualifications up to level 7.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Tina Lambert

Inspection activities

- The inspector viewed all areas and discussed with the leaders how these areas are used and kept safe for children.
- Leaders and the inspector evaluated the effectiveness of an activity together.
- The inspector spoke to staff and children throughout the inspection.
- The inspector took into account the views of parents.
- Leaders provided a range of relevant documentation on request.
- Leaders and the inspector discussed how the early years curriculum is organised.

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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