

Friary Preschool

Unique reference number (URN): 2744744

Address: Friary Pre School, Southgate Drive, Crawley, RH10 6HD

Type: Childcare on non-domestic premises

Registered with Ofsted: 15/09/2023

Registers: EYR

Registered person: Arundel and Brighton Diocesan Trust

Inspection report: 4 December 2025

Exceptional

Strong standard



Expected standard

Needs attention

Urgent improvement

Safeguarding standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, children are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect settings for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- **Met:** The setting has an open and positive culture of safeguarding.
- **Not met:** The setting has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

Strong standard ●

Achievement

Strong standard ●

Children demonstrate their ability to recall curriculum-related stories, expertly read by staff. For example, they eagerly answer questions posed to them and build on their already strong knowledge of the Nativity. Children show they are very articulate and confident to speak in a group situation. This reflects the high-quality teaching they receive.

Staff actively involve parents and carers in discussions about the next steps for children's learning and what they can support them with at home. This contributes effectively to all children making rapid progress from their starting points and closing any gaps in their learning. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities quickly achieve targeted activities planned for them. For instance, they eagerly observe staff demonstrate a selection of cause-and-effect toys from a bucket to spark their curiosity, such as a wind-up bath toy. Children increase their joint attention skills and secure the foundational skills they need for later learning.

Behaviour, attitudes and establishing routines

Strong standard ●

Leaders and staff maintain extremely high expectations for children's behaviour in line with established policies and procedures. Staff relationships with children are strong. They skilfully model positive interactions, and children listen and respond with respect. For instance, they remind children during circle time of the behavioural expectations for being together in a group, speaking through a toy elf to help them process information, emotions and instructions to keep everyone safe. Children show high levels of concentration and behave extremely well.

Leaders develop innovative approaches to praise positive behaviour. For example, they write kind acts on green paper leaves and add them to branches of an indoor tree. Children begin to recognise their own acts of kindness and successfully manage their own feelings and behaviour.

Children show great kindness, care and respect towards their friends, including children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. For instance, they put their arms around their friends to support them to increasingly engage in adult-led activities and help them learn and achieve. All children are welcomed and belong.

Leaders communicate clearly the expectations for children's attendance to staff and parents and carers and aim to work consistently to establish a regular routine and positive attitudes to learning. They actively help parents and children facing adversity to overcome any barriers to attendance to support their future success.

Children's welfare and wellbeing

Strong standard ●

Staff know children extremely well. They develop strong attachments with their key children to help them to develop a feeling of emotional security and safety. This encourages children to develop the confidence to seek help from adults when they need to.

Staff consistently help children to recognise, articulate and regulate their emotions to foster a secure sense of emotional wellbeing. They teach a broad range of emotion-related words and provide clear explanations of their meaning. For example, children confidently express to adults they are 'angry' when they encounter challenges with sharing. They demonstrate effective self-regulation and appropriate emotional responses, which significantly contribute to their overall emotional development and resilience.

Staff work highly effectively with parents and carers to support toilet training, ensuring consistency between home and the setting. They promote children's health, self-care and independence exceptionally well. For instance, children are extremely confident in managing their own personal routines, such as washing their hands, brushing their teeth and preparing fruit at snack time.

All staff have gone over and above to complete training on children's oral health and actively promote healthy eating habits. For example, they work closely with parents to provide children with healthy, nutritious packed lunches. Children lead active lives. They can make informed choices about whether to take part in daily physical activities, both indoors and outdoors. This successfully supports children to develop their physical and emotional health. Additionally, staff plan regular forest school sessions for children to explore nature and the wider world. Children learn how to stay safe and healthy.

Curriculum and teaching

Strong standard 

Leaders have an excellent overview of the curriculum and teaching. They guide staff to design an ambitious curriculum for all children's learning. Staff use their assessments of children's abilities to carefully select curriculum-linked books for a small group-focused session, such as a story about the Nativity, the first Christmas. They skilfully adapt their teaching and ask children different levels of questions, such as 'Where is Mary?' to check their understanding and ensure their participation. Children benefit from high-quality interactions that build on their vocabulary and impressive language skills even further. Staff encourage back-and-forth conversations about the children's personal Christmas lists to maintain their concentration. Children enjoy taking turns speaking and learn to cooperate together in a group. They develop their personal and social skills effectively.

Staff have an expert knowledge of child development and know how to adapt their teaching to support children who have lower starting points for the area of communication and language. For example, they sensitively join in their play at the mud kitchen and talk about what they are doing, to help them hear good language structures. Staff teach children positional language, such as 'in' and 'out', when they spoon conkers in and out of the pan. This helps to encourage speech and extend their physical play skills. Staff actively support children in developing mathematical language while teaching mathematical concepts. For instance, they say, 'one more', modelling spooning a conker into a pan. Children consistently experience high-quality teaching.

Leaders place a strong emphasis on developing children's physical skills and actively promote outdoor learning. They ensure free access to a well-resourced outdoor environment to enable children to engage in purposeful play. For example, children enjoy rolling cars down ramps, and leaders help them compare distances, using numbered cones. This supports their early mathematical understanding and physical development.

Inclusion

Strong standard 

Leaders and staff ensure that children from disadvantaged families are supported effectively to make the best possible start in their learning and development. The setting receives additional funding and uses this carefully to help children to make excellent progress from their starting points. Parents and carers have a clear understanding of how targeted support plans and resources help their children progress even further, such as in their mathematical development. This focused support lays a strong foundation for future success.

Leaders and staff identify children's additional needs accurately and quickly to reduce any barriers to their development and learning. They actively work in partnership with parents and other professionals to gain support and advice about any reasonable adjustments, adaptations and inclusive practices. This ensures the highest possible support for children's care and education to enable children to thrive, belong and achieve.

Staff provide excellent support for all children's understanding and communication, including children with speech and language difficulties. For example, they expertly use their Makaton training to sign, and they use visual aids to advance the equality of opportunity between children who share and do not share a relevant protected characteristic. Staff actively monitor and assess which children already know a collection of signs when children eagerly demonstrate them during circle time, such as 'Good morning.' Staff teach new signs, such as 'Christmas', to promote good relations between all children.

Leadership and governance

Strong standard 

Leaders are excellent and work closely with a very committed and established team. Staff morale is high. For example, staff say they feel fully supported in their roles. Leaders have worked tirelessly with the team to raise the quality of the provision. They have made many impressive improvements to the environment, such as replacing plastic toys with more engaging natural resources. Every aspect of the nursery has been reflected on. Committee members, parents and carers and children have all made valuable contributions in helping leaders to achieve their vision, such as further improving the outdoor area.

Leadership is exceptional. Leaders inspire and empower staff to continually enhance the curriculum experiences for children. For example, they conduct peer observations and regular supervision sessions to ensure the team's planning and teaching skills are consistently refined, leading to exemplary standards of practice. Leaders work effectively with professionals to organise training for staff, such as speech and language training, to further improve the setting's local offer to families.

Partnerships with parents are extremely effective. Parents speak highly about the care and education their children receive and describe staff as supportive and approachable. They feel well informed about the day-to-day activities and their children's progress, such as through face-to-face discussions and a regular newsletter. Staff share ideas to support their learning at home.

Leaders forge strong links with local community services and with the primary and secondary school. For example, the nursery has organised visits from the police, paramedics and firefighters to improve the quality and safety of children's education. Children experience real-life learning opportunities that enrich the nursery's curriculum, which supports their wellbeing effectively.

What it's like to be a child at this setting

Children develop positive and trusting relationships with leaders and staff. They settle quickly into the routines of the day and show a strong sense of belonging. Children benefit from the thoughtful touches that staff make to the environment, such as natural displays and seasonal decorations, to create an extremely welcoming atmosphere that helps children to feel secure and comfortable.

Children enjoy a stimulating festive play-dough activity to help further extend their physical capabilities. For example, they roll and mould the dough into a sausage shape with precision and insert cinnamon sticks to make pretend candles. Children show excellent control and hand-eye coordination, which is later linked to achievement in early literacy. They demonstrate high levels of concentration. Children learn new concepts rapidly from staff, who help them to build on previous concepts that they have already understood. For example, they push sparkly pipe cleaners into a flat base of dough to make rainbow bridges. Children test out their ideas and show they are very creative and imaginative. They respond positively to praise and thrive in their learning.

Children benefit from leaders' and staff's strong focus on supporting children to regulate their emotions and build resilience to setbacks. They can relax in an inviting cosy area designed to support sensory regulation while providing a sense of security for all children. Children are consistently supported by staff to express their own emotions and recognise the feelings of others, which helps them to develop empathy and understanding. They have already learned to confidently describe how they feel to adults. Children learn very positive social skills to help make friendships.

Next steps

- Leaders and those responsible for governance should sustain their work to ensure continued improvement and high standards. They should focus on creating a transformational impact on the outcomes and experiences of children.
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About this inspection

The inspector spoke with the leaders, the manager, practitioners and the special educational needs coordinator during the inspection.

The inspector spoke to parents and carers.

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.

A quality assurance visit by an additional inspector was carried out at this inspection.

Inspector:

Jane Winnan

About this setting

Unique reference number (URN): 2744744

Address:

Friary Pre School
Southgate Drive
Crawley
RH10 6HD

Type: Childcare on non-domestic premises

Registration date: 15/09/2023

Registered person: Arundel and Brighton Diocesan Trust

Register(s): EYR

Operating hours: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday : 09:00 - 15:00

Facts and figures used on inspection

This data was available to the inspector at the time of the inspection.

 This data is from 4 December 2025

Children numbers

Age range of children at the time of inspection

2 to 4

Total number of places

40

Our grades explained

Exceptional 

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other settings can learn from it.

Strong standard 

The setting reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard 

The setting is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention 

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement 

The setting needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

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