

# Children 1st

Inspection report for early years provision

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**Unique reference number** EY279966  
**Inspection date** 22/09/2008  
**Inspector** Jackie Cousins

**Setting address** St Peter's School, Cottonmill Lane, St. Albans,  
Hertfordshire, AL1 1HL

**Telephone number** 01727 853075

**Email**

**Type of setting** Childcare on non-domestic premises

## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration whichever is the later, which require Ofsted or the provider to take action in Annex C.

The provider must provide a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must provide a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Childcare (Inspection) Regulations 2008 regulations 9 and 10).

The setting also makes provision for children older than the early years age group which is registered on the voluntary and/or compulsory part(s) of the Childcare Register. This report does not include an evaluation of that provision, but a comment about compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Register is included in Annex B.

## **Description of the setting**

Children 1st pre-school first opened in 2004. The pre-school is privately owned and operates within the premises of St Peter's Primary School in the town of St. Albans. The pre-school has sole access, while open, to the early years classrooms and fenced outside area. A maximum of 36 children may attend the pre-school at any one time between the ages of 3 and 4 years. It is open Monday to Friday from 12:45 to 15:15 with an optional lunchtime club from 11:30 to 13:30. It is open for 39 weeks a year. Children attend for a variety of sessions or for all of them. There are currently 54 children on roll. Children come from a broad variety of backgrounds and a wide catchment area.

The pre-school employs six members of staff to work with the children. Three members of staff hold degrees in early childhood education and two are working towards an NVQ level 2. The owners manage the provision. The pre-school is on the Early Years Register and both parts of the Childcare Register. Effective access is available for disabled adults and children due to the use of ramps and the main part of the setting is on one level. The setting receives support from the local authority and is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance (PSLA).

## **Overall effectiveness of the early years provision**

Children 1st is a fun and enjoyable place for children to start their education because it is led well. Children are kept safe due to the fact that welfare requirements are met in full. Effective policies are in place to promote children's learning. Children from different backgrounds and abilities are included effectively in all learning activities. The pre-school offers good support for children who have additional needs or speak English as an additional language although at present none attend the setting. It has made significant improvements since the last inspection and is in a good position to improve in the future.

## **What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?**

To further improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- ensure planning always sets clear learning objectives for all outside learning activities
- ensure that assessments of children always record the next steps that they will take
- ensure that all staff are clear about all aspects of the child protection policy relating to staff protecting themselves.

## **The leadership and management of the early years provision**

Good leadership and management have created thorough policies to ensure children's welfare. The managers have evaluated the way the pre-school is working

and is keen to improve it. She is seeking to improve information and communication technology resources. Staff are encouraged to develop their teaching skills by going on training courses. Two members of staff have started on a Level 2 early years qualification. Significant improvements since the last inspection include the fact that detailed children's developmental records are freely available for parents to read. The children are safeguarded appropriately because required checks are carried out on staff before they start at the pre-school. The leadership works extremely successfully with parents and staff are always available to discuss any concerns with them. The parents spoken to were happy with all that the pre-school offers children. Termly meetings with staff allow parents to discuss their child's progress and developmental records.

## **The quality and standards of the early years provision**

Children develop their key skills effectively because staff have high expectations of them. As a result they achieve well. Children learn to use language and literacy successfully due to the expertise of staff. For example, children learn that pictures have meaning because staff model reading expressively. Children's language skills are developed effectively due to the fact that staff consistently use open-ended questioning to encourage children to use imaginative words. Staff help children to learn to count accurately, for example when they get together as a group and count the number of children present. Children write and draw thoughtfully when they make marks on the black paper. The children's knowledge and understanding of the world is promoted successfully. In a session seen during the inspection, children learned about how to handle young plants because staff used practical methods effectively. Staff assess children carefully using developmental guidance and are clear about what children need to do to improve their skills but the next steps they will take are not recorded formally. Children's creative development is promoted well; for example, they learn to use paints regularly. They enjoy learning to create pictures of their family. The children's physical development is promoted effectively. They are taught how to pedal bikes due to the fact that children can cycle around various routes. Activities are planned for each week and a good range of resources is made available to children. Planning for the outside area does not always set specific learning objectives for key activities for children of different ages or abilities.

Standards of children's welfare are good because this aspect is given a high priority. The children are watched over very attentively whether they are in the classrooms or in the outside area. The children are confident to go to any member of staff. This is because staff give children positive feedback. Children are kept safe in many ways due to the effective use of policies. The children handle equipment extremely safely because staff guide them considerately. Daily checks are carried out appropriately on the setting by staff. Parents' permission is gained in writing before medicines are given to children. The first aid box is well maintained. Any allergies which children suffer from are effectively displayed in a cupboard and this ensures that all staff are aware of foods which should not be given. Good systems are in place to ensure that only parents and known carers collect children. Fire drills are carried out regularly. Children's occasional accidents are dealt with professionally because three members of staff have a first aid qualification for younger children. The few accidents which children have had are recorded usefully in a folder. Staff have received up-to-date

child protection training but not all are totally clear about what would happen if an allegation was made about them.

Children's personal development is outstanding because staff care for their pastoral needs very well. Children's enjoyment is exceptionally clear when they are observed doing all the exciting activities planned for them. They thoroughly enjoyed learning about materials when they explored the properties of uncooked pieces of rice. The children learn to share at snack time because they sit at a table together. They learn to take turns and cooperate successfully because staff manage them astutely. Children behave and concentrate extremely well. They learn to be independent successfully and so they often choose activities for themselves. They are outstandingly effective in learning about how to eat healthily when they are offered food such as crackers, cream cheese and cucumber at mid-afternoon snack time. Children cook every two weeks and create healthy meals such as pumpkin soup and hedgehog rolls with wholemeal flour. Children enjoy a drink of water or juice half way through the session due to staff developing routines successfully. They can have a drink at any time because there is a water fountain in the outside area. With their very successfully developed social skills and effectively promoted key skills they are well prepared for the next stage of education.

## Annex A: record of inspection judgements

### The key inspection judgements and what they mean

*Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality*

*Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong*

*Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound*

*Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough*

### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?</b>	2
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	2

### Leadership and management

<b>How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?</b>	2
How effective is the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement?	2
How well does the setting work in partnership with parents and others?	1
How well are children safeguarded?	2

### Quality and standards

<b>How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?</b>	2
<b>How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?</b>	2
How well are children helped to stay safe?	1
How well are children helped to be healthy?	1
How well are children helped to enjoy and achieve?	2
How well are children helped to make a positive contribution?	1
How well are children helped develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	2

Any complaints about the inspection or report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

## **Annex B: the Childcare Register**

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are: Met

The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are: Met

## **Annex C: complaint/s made to Ofsted**

This section of the report includes details of any complaint/s made to Ofsted when:

- we took action for the provider to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register; or
- we asked the provider to take action in order to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register; or
- the provider had already taken any necessary action to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register.

We will not report on any complaint where the provider met the requirements of the Early Years Register or did not require any action by Ofsted or the registered provider.

### **Detail of the complaint/s**

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since the last inspection.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.