

Little Stars Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	EY384344
Inspection date	02/03/2009
Inspector	Kay Williams

Setting address	St Lukes Church, Cell Barnes Lane, St Albans, Hertfordshire, AL1 5PX
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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).

Description of the setting

Little Stars Pre-school was registered in 2008 and is one of two settings owned by the proprietor. The setting operates from a large hall in St Luke's Church in St Albans, Hertfordshire. The setting has additional use of a large room on the ground floor. They use a garden in the church grounds and a cordoned area of the car park for outside play sessions. Access to the setting is difficult for adults and children with mobility issues because the hall is situated upstairs and there is no lift.

The setting is registered on the Early Years Register. The provision operates a pre-school group for children aged from two years six months to approximately three years each morning and on Monday, Wednesday and Friday afternoons. The nursery sessions operate each morning for children aged from three years up to five years. Both provisions operate from 09:00 until 12:00. The afternoon sessions run from 12:30 until 15:00. A maximum of 40 children may attend the morning session and a maximum of 24 children may attend in the afternoon sessions. There are currently 67 children aged two to under five years on roll. The setting is in receipt of funding for early education. The setting currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The setting employs 11 members of staff, including the manager. Of these, six hold appropriate early years qualifications and three are working towards a recognised qualification.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is satisfactory. Staff are kind and sensitive and support children's welfare and learning effectively, consequently children enjoy their time spent in the setting and are making steady progress. Most children are valued as individuals because staff have clear line of communication with parents which effectively promotes children's continuity of care especially when supporting children with additional needs. However, practice to support children who are learning English as an additional language is not fully developed. This newly registered provision is developing its principles and practices to satisfactory effect overall and is aware of the areas of practice that require improvement but have yet to fully develop an action plan to secure future improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- develop a more robust system for self-evaluation in order to enhance the capacity to maintain continuous improvement and how it impacts on children's achievements
- conduct a risk assessment on the plastic sheeting that covers the carpet

- develop a greater understanding of inclusive practice, especially in order to support children who are learning English as an additional language
- review the educational programme to ensure that all children have the opportunity to engage in the full range activities and seek to improve the opportunities for outdoor play

To fully meet the specific requirements of the EYFS, the registered person must:

- ensure that all staff records are readily accessible and available for inspection at all times (Documentation)

06/03/2009

The leadership and management of the early years provision

Staff interact well with the children, they make good play partners for them, supporting their learning to positive effective as they engage with them at their chosen activity. The newly appointed manager is developing her leadership skills and is fostering effective team work with good intent. However, the system for self-evaluation is still at its early stages and has yet to be implemented to full effect. For example, it is acknowledged that the daily routine interrupts the flow of children's play and learning but the means for addressing this issue have not been fully explored. Not all records were available for inspection. Staff meet regularly to plan for children's learning and review the activities that they provide. This reflective practice has supported children's further learning. For example, as children developed a keen interest around mini beasts their learning is extended as staff plan for them to learn about animals in a wider context.

Children are safeguarded because most staff have a clear understanding of the signs and symptoms of child abuse and knowledge of the procedure to follow should they become concerned about the safety of any of the children in their care. The policy is clearly written and staff sign to say they understand the principles.

Parents are encouraged to share what they know about their child when they first start, this helps staff to plan for children's individual needs and interests. Parents are offered some useful information regarding the setting's policies and procedures and they value the ease in which they can talk to the staff at any time. Staff intend to arrange regular opportunities to share the children's progress record with parents, this will further encourage parents' involvement in their children learning. The setting is developing links with others including: health visitors, the neighbouring school and the local authority in order to develop their understanding and practice to support children learning English as an additional language.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Children arrive enthusiastically and settle quickly to their chosen activity. They confidently part from their parents or carers, eagerly engaging in conversation with the staff about what they have done during the weekend. Overall, staff have

sound knowledge of how to promote children's development. They know that children learn best through first hand experiences and plan a wide range of interesting, stimulating activities that cover most aspects of the six areas. However, group and snack time consumes a large proportion of the morning. As a result, children do not have sufficient time to enjoy the full range of activities available to them. Nonetheless children are making sound progress. Staff observe children's progress and use this information to plan for their next steps. Staff effectively support children's learning by asking questions and interacting with them at an appropriate level. For example, more animals were brought to the water tray to extend children's counting skills and their knowledge of quantity, size, sequencing and addition.

Children enjoy a wide range of sensorial experiences as they play with animals in a bowl of jelly and make marks in the shaving foam. They develop their creative skills as they paint, print and draw. They are developing their fine motor skills as they learn to control scissor, complete puzzles and handle dough tools. The development of their large physical skills is planned for. Children use the hall for movement to music and playing with the parachute, although once per week is not sufficiently regular. In addition there are no opportunities for children to develop climbing skills and outdoor learning is restricted. Older children are articulate communicators who are talking confidently to the group about the animal they have brought in from home. They enjoy re-enacting stories with finger puppets and they listen attentively at story time. Although the younger children's story session did not retain their interest as it lasted too long.

Children's healthy well-being is effectively promoted as they enjoy a health snack of fresh fruit, with a choice milk or water to drink. All children's dietary needs are catered for and they can independently access a drink of water throughout the session. Children are learning about good personal hygiene as they wash their hands before they eat and after they have used the toilet. Their good hygiene is further promoted as they use disposable hand towels and nappy changes are conducted hygienically. The risk of infection is significantly reduced as only children who are well enough are permitted to attend. Accidents are recorded to good effect and most staff hold a current first aid qualification so that children are well cared for in the event of accident or injury. Children are cared for in a warm, safe environment that is clean and well maintained. Children's safety is assured as they arrive and depart under the close supervision of the staff who greet them. Staff make every effort to ensure that children are not exposed to unnecessary hazards routinely checking the hall before they set it out each day. However, the plastic floor covering around the 'messy play area' is a potential trip hazard.

Children are very well behaved, the calm staff approach has a positive impact on this and creates a fun atmosphere within the setting. Children play cooperatively and help to tidy up when asked.

Parents are invited to help out in the setting and as a result children have enjoyed an opportunity to listen to story read to them in French. Children are learning about cultures other than their own and a range of festivals are acknowledged throughout the year. Some resources reflect diversity, however there is little text available in languages other than English consequently children are not learning about the rich diversity of written languages.

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

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	3
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	3
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	3

Leadership and management

How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	3
How effective is the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement?	3
How well does the setting work in partnership with parents and others?	3
How well are children safeguarded?	3

Quality and standards

How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?	3
How well are children helped to stay safe?	3
How well are children helped to be healthy?	3
How well are children helped to enjoy and achieve?	3
How well are children helped to make a positive contribution?	3
How well are children helped develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	3

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

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 registration.

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.