

St Alban's Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector Rachel Ruth Britten

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Type of setting Childcare on non-domestic premises

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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*.

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Description of the setting

St Albans Pre-School was registered in 1981. The setting is committee run and operates from a fully accessible mobile classroom situated within the boundary of St. Alban's Catholic Primary School. There is a secure area available for outdoor play. A maximum of 40 children aged two to five years may attend the setting at any one time. The setting is open five days a week from 9am to 11.30am and 12.30pm to 3.00pm during term time. Children attend from the local community and parish of St. Albans and most go on to attend the catholic school.

There are currently 60 children on roll aged from two to four years. All of these are within the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). The setting receives funding for nursery education. The setting supports a number of children with special educational needs and disabilities and also supports children who speak English as an additional language.

The setting employs nine members of staff including the manager. Six staff are qualified to level three in early years and one member of staff is working towards a recognised early years qualification. In addition, the setting employs an administrator. The setting receives support from the local authority early years advisory team and takes part in a number of early years pilot and research projects.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Staff successfully recognise the uniqueness of each child and support each one to make good progress in their learning and development. They safeguard and provide particularly well for children with a range of learning, development and language needs. Partnerships are well developed overall and leaders work extremely hard to keep abreast of new legislation and teaching styles to benefit all children's progress. Processes for monitoring the setting and making improvements are mostly effective, led strongly by the highly committed manager. The effectiveness of partnerships is mostly good.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- evolve clear systems to ensure that all people working directly with children notify anything which may affect their suitability or qualification to work with children
- continue to develop the key worker links with families and other providers, including sharing progress and next steps plans regularly, so that children receive consistency of care and make maximum progress in all aspects of their day

- ensure that all information about children's learning and development goes into the record promptly and is used to inform regular summaries of progress and next steps plans so that the record best supports each child's continuous progress.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Overall, children are well safeguarded because the setting is well organised and prioritises safety. The mostly long-standing staff team is suitably vetted, qualified, trained and supported and knows how to implement the procedures for dealing with concerns about abuse. However, a system to ensure that staff remain suitable and disclose anything that may compromise their suitability has not been established. There are high adult-to-child ratios and all staff are first aid trained and vigilant. Risk assessments are satisfactorily used to ensure children's health and safety indoors, outside and on outings. There is a trained, designated member of staff responsible for safeguarding and all staff are involved in teaching children how to adopt safe practices. Displays and the parent prospectus contain up-to-date policies and information about child protection, health issues and how to complain or give feedback, making the setting's commitment to health and safety very clear. For example, care is taken to employ robust procedures for use of photographs of children.

The manager is supernumerary. She is highly supportive of all staff and has a link with each child and family. She plans to visit each family home before new children start and allocates key workers based, where possible, upon children's preferences. The manager shares her vision and ambition with staff and parents through open days, meetings and daily informal contacts, although parents and carers do not presently come into the setting at the end of sessions which removes an opportunity for discussing children's progress. Working alongside the children's centre, child development centre and various specialists, there is a team approach to meeting the individual needs of children and families. The manager also implements well-chosen changes to the organisation of the setting, following the advice, training and support of early years advisors. The setting takes part in projects which seek to improve outcomes for children, for example, in literacy and speech. It is highly effective in promoting equality of opportunity. Children with special educational needs, disabilities or English as an additional language are supported extremely well, and good regard is given to the specific learning needs of boys, through awareness of the importance of active, constructive, outdoor and larger play materials. The language, music, customs, dietary requirements and celebrations of each child's family are regularly included, often with the direct input of parents.

The setting effectively identifies its strengths and weaknesses and has made good progress since the last inspection. The environment and resources continue to be maintained to a high standard and now promote children's independent play choices and confidence to be creative and use materials in diverse ways. Able, well trained staff are committed to sustaining the good quality setting and providing the EYFS curriculum to each child and are looking for ways to tailor the routines of the

day to extend the amount of time they spend in contact with their key children. They have implemented a questionnaire to obtain information about children's starting points at entry, so that their particular needs and interests can be provided for from the outset. However, individual information and next steps plans from key workers that inform learning records do not always include information from involved others to form coherent individual assessments and plans for every child. This impacts on the effectiveness of team working in maximising children's progress because there is no one place where all information and plans are available for use. Despite this, parents express enormous confidence in the standard of care, attention to specific needs and circumstances, communication, and their children's preparation for the future.

The quality and standards of the early years provision and outcomes for children

Children enjoy their learning and achieve well in relation to their starting points. This is because the environment and simple routine provides children with good opportunities to choose play materials and follow their individual learning styles. Staff make activity plans based upon children's interests and support children's play, weaving in each of the areas of learning. Opportunities to be outside developing physical skills and knowledge and understanding of the world are fostered through trips into the town or park and use of varied climbing and balancing equipment in the playground. Children's health is also well supported through healthy snacks and the teaching of good manners and healthy habits which minimise cross-infection. Staff are good role models, supporting many children to become confidently toilet trained and showing children how to maintain personal health through regular nose blowing, disposing of tissues and washing hands. Children are often involved in setting up and clearing away, but staff undertake some of these activities without including children.

Children are secure and safe in the setting and feel a sense of belonging, fostered by consistent care from staff and appropriate resources. They find their name card for the 'Tigger board', put their things in their named drawer and have their own peg. A symbol alongside their name helps word recognition and displayed photographs of them foster a sense of worth as well as helping consolidate memories of things they have been doing. Music, creative, messy play and opportunities to make marks and begin to learn about words, letters and stories are good. Children enjoy looking at books and being read to and take home books each week for their families to read with them. They are confident and look after each other well as they devise their own role plays and ideas, using the home area or the sand tray and trucks. They enjoy games and 'listening walks' outside and expertly tow and park their tricycles at the end of outdoor playtime. They are becoming confident with using the computer mouse and solving problems using the tool bar or various construction materials. Some boys particularly enjoy making maps and acting out a pirates treasure chest play while some girls particularly enjoy the hairdressing salon role play. Indian dancing is seen being skilfully taught and demonstrated by one staff member and children delightedly join in, copying quite intricate movements in time to the music.

Children behave well and are beginning to form positive relationships. Circle and group times are well used to give children opportunities to take turns and share, for example choosing an object from the bag and deciding what related song the group shall sing. They learn about valuing physical differences as they look in the mirror and choose paint matching their skin tone for their self-portrait. Children enjoy dressing up and learning about the festival of Diwali which some of their friends are celebrating. They try the food treats and say some of the words for them. Staff have a generally good knowledge of the five outcomes for children and the six areas of learning and bear these in mind as they support children to learn through purposeful play and activity. They observe and record what children can do and match this to the expectations of the early learning goals. However, summaries of progress over periods of time and next steps plans are not yet documented because a new system has just been started. This makes it hard to see in the records exactly what progress a child has made and what the learning objectives are for that child.

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

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	2

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	2
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding	2
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	2
The effectiveness of partnerships	2
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	2

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	2
The extent to which children feel safe	2
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	2
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	2

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