

St Lawrence Church Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspection date	11/12/2009
Inspector	Gillian Walley
Setting address	Hillhouse C of E Primary School, Ninefields, Waltham Abbey, Essex, EN9 3EL
Telephone number	01992 719594
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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. Lawrence Church Pre-School was established in 1984 and operates from a classroom within Hill House C. of E. Primary School in a residential area of Waltham Abbey. A maximum of 20 children may attend at any one time. The pre-school is open each weekday from 09.00am to 12:00pm during term-times. There are currently 29 children on roll, some of whom receive funding for nursery education. Children attend from the local area. The pre-school supports a small number of children with special educational needs and English as an additional language. There is no disabled access. The pre-school employs six staff, three of whom have relevant early years qualifications including the manager. Two members of staff are currently working towards a Level 3 qualification. The group works closely with the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP) and the Pre-School Learning Alliance. (PSLA) and receives support from the Area Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO).

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Overall the provision was judged to be good. It is inclusive and meets the needs of all children so that they make good progress. The new manager has made many improvements in her first term. She evaluates the pre-school provision regularly in consultation with others to identify further changes which could be made. She then implements the changes promptly. The pre-school has a good capacity to improve.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- develop the system for assessing children's progress so that specific groups and areas of learning can be monitored
- consider displaying print, numbers and shapes in the outdoor learning environment to support the older children's independent learning
- consider providing parents with more information about the progress of their children through reports and meetings
- practise evacuating the building more frequently so that children are familiar with the procedure.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The new manager has made significant changes in her first term and has an action plan based on the evaluation of the procedures and the provision for the children. She works closely with the local authority, her staff are well-qualified and experienced, and there have been many changes since the last inspection report so it is likely that the pre-school will continue to improve.

The staff are very vigilant about children's safety, and there are good policies and procedures in place to ensure that children are safe at all times, and these are reviewed frequently. The premises are secure, and visitors sign in. New staff are vetted appropriately and there is good induction for them so that they are familiar with the children's routines. The staff make regular checks to identify any possible risks and they take action to avoid accidents. If a child has to be given medicine or has an accident two members of staff take responsibility, they complete records and these are signed by parents. Parents are telephoned about any matter which might concern them, for example, if their child has been upset. There are fire drills but they do not happen frequently enough for children to remember them.

The staff take responsibility for planning each area of learning for half a term so that over a year they will all become very knowledgeable about the learning opportunities they can provide for the children. The pre-school works closely with the adjoining primary school, and the children use its playground, trim trail and field. The children also visit the school for special events, such as the Nativity and they use its computer suite. This contact helps children to settle easily when they move into the Reception class.

The pre-school works closely with outside agencies to support children who find learning more difficult, and their families. This ensures that these children make good progress. Parents speak highly of how much the manager has helped to support their children and how useful it is to know what help is available for them.

The pre-school has a good partnerships with parents, who have every confidence in the manager and her staff to help their children to make good progress and to care for them. They feel that the children make good progress in their social development because the staff have high expectations of them and they are good role models. They feel that this helps the children to behave well at home too. Parents like the fact that every child is known well and treated as an individual because this helps the children to feel secure. They find the staff helpful and approachable, they appreciate being able to talk informally at the beginning and end of sessions, and can look at planning and menus on the notice board so that they know what their children are doing and what snacks they have eaten.

The new manager has recently surveyed the parents and there is a suggestions box because she welcomes their views about procedures. Parents like to see their children's records because this means they know what they are learning about and they can continue the learning at home. At the end of each session parents receive a note telling them of specific things the child has done, and there is a board at the entrance telling them of the main activities for the session. Parents would also value receiving more detailed information, for example, in written reports or through parents' meetings.

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

When children start coming to the pre-school parents are asked to provide very detailed information about their children's interests and preferences so that the staff can plan activities which will interest them and help them to settle. All children make good progress because the staff assess them carefully in order to decide what activities to plan for each child so that they move on in their learning. They keep very thorough records which parents can see if they wish to. As yet the assessments are not recorded in a way which makes it possible for the staff to compare the progress made by different groups of children, or the progress made in different areas of learning, so the manager cannot evaluate precisely how well the provision matches the children's needs. The staff give the children the opportunity to choose what they want to do and whether they want to play indoors or outside, and plan activities around the children's choices.

The children behave very well, and support one another so that no child is left with no one to play with. The staff deal constructively with children and are especially supportive towards children who are unsettled so that they feel secure and become more confident. The children develop very good relationships with the adults, who encourage and praise them. Children play well together, take turns and share their toys. Children persevere with puzzles and enjoy role play and dressing up. Photographs and vocabulary about building are displayed to encourage them to use and recognise new words while they build walls on their construction site. Children play in their supermarket, talking about different food and paying for what they buy. They like to join in with well-known songs and play musical instruments.

The environment is stimulating and there is a wide range of good quality resources for the children to choose from to support their development in all areas of learning. The children make good progress in their creative development, for example, by making Christmas cards and decorations, and their achievements are displayed on the walls to give them high self-esteem.

The children learn about healthy eating because they enjoy nutritious snacks and help themselves to drinking water. They understand how to avoid infection because they know when to wash their hands and the importance of using tissues if they have a cold. The children learn about different customs and special times of the year, for example, at Divali they enjoyed some creative activities, tasted foods, and looked at pictures and books about the festival. The children learn about special times in the Christian calendar.

The children enjoy playing outdoors and have many activities to choose from including riding vehicles and growing plants. The area is motivating but it does not help to reinforce the children's familiarity with sounds, numbers and shapes and the manager has identified this as an area to develop soon.

The staff encourage the children to solve problems and they challenge them by asking them questions about their activities. Children become independent, for example, by choosing when they would like to eat their snacks and by finding their

names at registration time, and they develop a sense of responsibility by helping to tidy up after activities. The children feel secure because the staff take very good care of them and are concerned for their well-being, for example, when they go outside after it has been raining the children are reminded to take care not to slip.

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	2
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

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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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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