

Strathmore Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector

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Type of setting

Childcare - Non-Domestic

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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*.

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.

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Description of the setting

Strathmore Pre-School is run by a voluntary management committee and was re-registered in 2010. It operates from one room within Strathmore School in Hitchin, Hertfordshire. The setting serves the local area and has strong links with the school in which it is sited. It is accessible to all children and there is a fully enclosed area available for outdoor play.

The setting opens Monday to Friday during school term times. Sessions are from 9am until 12 noon daily and from 12.30pm to 3pm on Monday to Thursday. There is a lunch club from 11.30am to 12.30pm. Children are able to attend for a variety of sessions. A maximum of 16 children may attend the setting at any one time. There are currently 39 children on roll who are within the Early Years Foundation Stage. The setting also offers care to children aged over five years to eight years. It is registered on the Early Years Register and on the compulsory part of the Childcare Register. The setting provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-olds and supports children who speak English as an additional language.

The setting employs six members of childcare staff, five of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 or above. It receives support from the local authority.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

The manager and staff demonstrate a positive attitude to self-evaluation and are developing effective procedures to support the continuous review of their work. This enables them to develop action plans and implement appropriate improvements, thereby providing a service which is responsive to children's needs. Staff work well with parents, carers and other professionals, ensuring that they gain a thorough understanding of each child's needs. They are therefore able to make sure that these are consistently met and offer children appropriate support so that they are meaningfully included in all activities and daily routines. Staff are caring and committed to their work, implementing thorough child-centred planning procedures, which ensure that children's learning and development are promoted.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- develop further the assessment and planning procedures in order to update the next steps in a child's developmental progress, and regularly review this approach
- improve the systems for organisation of the setting by developing the use of

self-evaluation to support ongoing improvements.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children's welfare is consistently promoted because staff have a good understanding of their responsibilities relating to safeguarding children, regularly attending relevant training in order to update their knowledge. This is supported by a clear written procedure, enabling staff to identify children at risk and take appropriate action. Robust checks are carried out to ensure that all staff are suitable to work with children. Thorough risk assessments and daily safety checks mean that children's safety is promoted. Ongoing explanations and specific activities enable children to build a good knowledge of safety issues. For example, their understanding of road safety is gently reinforced through visits from the crossing patrol person.

The manager, staff and voluntary management committee work well together and have a clear vision for the future development of the setting. Their ongoing review of practice means that they have a realistic picture of their strengths and weaknesses and can prioritise changes that improve the outcomes for children. For example, recent changes include the re-organisation of the main play area to make sure that resources are appealingly displayed and accessible. This means that the environment is stimulating and children can make independent choices about their play. However, the self-evaluation process is not fully utilised to inform the overall review of daily practice and to evaluate the impact of changes made. Staff work well as a team and are supported in attending additional training. This helps to create a positive atmosphere where children learn and play happily. Resources are used well to promote children's learning and development. For example, children use the school playground and nature area and also enjoy visits from the fire brigade.

Staff demonstrate a clear understanding of anti-discriminatory practice. They regularly review the setting's policies and procedures to ensure that these reflect current guidance and children's needs, supporting them in providing a service which is inclusive for all. They work closely with parents to ensure that they have a thorough understanding of each child's background and needs, taking account of this information when planning activities. Good relationships with parents and carers mean that they are kept well informed of their child's progress and activities, for example, through regular consultation events and the use of a white board to display daily information. The setting also works well with other professionals. For example, they have procedures in place to exchange information with childminders and other pre-schools, ensuring that children's care is consistent and their learning and development is promoted.

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

Children make good progress in their learning and development because staff have a clear understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage. They implement thorough procedures for assessing children, using this information to inform activity planning and ensure that children are offered appropriate activities that support their development. However, this is not fully promoted because the assessment and planning procedures do not always show how children's next steps are updated and consistently fed into the overall activity planning. Children's behaviour shows that they feel safe at the setting. For example, they make independent choices about their activities and readily include staff in their play and discussions. They therefore take an active role in their learning and are developing positive attitudes to this.

Staff interact well with the children, capturing their interest and attention. For example, when children choose a book a staff member sits with them and they discuss the illustrations; the children become engrossed as they talk about how fish move, count the tentacles on an octopus and discuss different environments and habitats. The good planning of activities means that children are encouraged to be active learners and experiment, gaining valuable skills for use in future life. For example, during cooking activities they weigh and measure the ingredients, discuss concepts of 'more' and 'less', and feel the texture and note the appearance of the ingredients before and after mixing and cooking.

Children are gaining a thorough understanding of appropriate behaviour as staff act as good role models, explaining to children the implications of their behaviour and encouraging them to share and work together. The good procedures for working with parents, carers and other professionals mean that children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who use English as an additional language are offered appropriate support to enable them to participate meaningfully. This is further supported through the use of resources, such as picture prompts and a visual timetable.

Children are offered appropriate opportunities to learn about other cultures and ways of life in a meaningful way. For example, they put together photographs and information about their families, discussing the different family compositions and traditions and going on to talk about issues, such as why some people need to wear glasses. Children are encouraged to understand the relevance of healthy lifestyles. For example, after participating in physical activities, they note their raised temperature and heart beat, going on to discuss how regular exercise helps to keep the body healthy. The good use of additional resources means that children's learning and development are promoted. For example, while following a current scheme, parents and children choose a 'bug' and a related activity, such as finding out about the weather, then carry out the activity, keeping a photographic and written record of this and sharing it with other children at the setting.

Thoughtful daily procedures mean that children feel valued and their self-esteem is promoted. For example, parents use 'leaves' to write about children's

achievements, adding these to the setting's 'achievement tree'. These are then shared with all children during group time and the information is also used to help update children's assessment records. Staff make very good use of these assessment records in order to further promote children's learning. For example, the records are readily accessible to children and they regularly sit with staff to review their files; they thoroughly enjoy reviewing the photographs and remembering the various activities, with staff using this opportunity to take further note of children's interests and plan future activities.

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

| | |
|--|---|
| The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage | 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

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| 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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Annex B: the Childcare Register

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

Met