

Saplings Pre-School

The Scout Hut, Birchwood Way, Park Street, St. Albans, Hertfordshire, AL2 2SE

Inspection date	26/10/2012
Previous inspection date	29/03/2011

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	2
	Previous inspection:	2
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		2
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		2
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		2

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision is good

- Children make good progress because they are fully supported in their learning and development. Their next steps and individual needs are well-planned for and effectively monitored.
- All staff are good role models and are deployed very well to provide support and guidance so that children continue to extend their learning relevant to their age and stage of development.
- An effective and well-established programme of professional development helps staff to improve their knowledge, understanding and practice.

It is not yet outstanding because

- Activities are not always effectively organised to ensure that children have a good balance of adult-led and child-initiated opportunities to provide challenging experiences that meet the needs of all children.
- Occasionally strengths and weaknesses are not suitably identified and linked to the setting's self-evaluation.

Information about this inspection

Inspections of registered early years provision are scheduled:

- at least once in every inspection cycle. The current cycle ends on 31 July 2016
- more frequently where Ofsted identifies a need to do so, for example where provision was previously judged as inadequate
- brought forward in the inspection cycle where Ofsted has received information that suggests the provision may not be meeting the legal requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage; or where assessment of the provision identifies a need for early inspection
- prioritised for inspection where we have received information that the provision is not meeting the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and which suggests children may not be safe
- at the completion of an investigation into failure to comply with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The provision is also registered on the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. This report includes a judgment about compliance with the requirements of that register.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed activities in the main hall and outdoor play area.
- The inspector talked to children and joined in with their activities.
- The inspector checked some of the nursery's policies, staff records and children's records.
- The inspector talked to staff about their key groups, planning, and assessment.

Inspector

Suman Willis

Full Report

Information about the setting

Saplings Pre-School was registered in 1999 on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. It is committee-run and operates from a scout hut in Park Street, St Albans, Hertfordshire. The pre-school serves the local area and is accessible to all children between the ages of two and five years. There is a fully-enclosed area available for outdoor play.

The nursery employs eight members of staff. Of these, one holds a level 1 qualification

and five are at level 3 or above. The nursery also supports students. The pre-school opens Monday to Thursday 9.15am to 12.15pm and Friday 9.15am to 3pm term time only. A lunch club is provided on Tuesdays from 12.15pm until 1pm. Afternoon sessions take place if demand allows. Children are able to attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 27 children on roll. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. It supports children who speak English as an additional language and children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

To further improve the quality of the early years provision the provider should:

- develop further the educational programme so children are provided with a good balance of both adult-led and child-initiated opportunities; this refers to group activities and the number of children in each group
- continue to develop monitoring systems for self-evaluation so that strengths and weaknesses are consistently highlighted and addressed.

Inspection judgements

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend

The educational programme is well-planned and fully supports children's learning and development. The learning environment is organised to offer children a broad range of interesting and challenging experiences based on their interests and needs. Children feel free and able to participate at their own level in their chosen activity. Staff are skilled at observing them and with encouragement successfully promote their confidence and independence. Children's language skills are fostered during story-time and through regular conversations during role-play. They are proud to demonstrate their counting skills while constructing with wooden blocks. Children enjoy playing 'Shop' and extend their technical and critical thinking skills as they use the till, handle payments and pretend to use a microphone. Staff are skilled at supporting children by guiding and asking open-ended questions. This enables a group of children to successfully complete a jigsaw puzzle. However, on rare occasions the learning intention is lost because children are occasionally in large groups and staff are not always aware that some children have lost interest. During outdoor play children concentrate well as they use building tools, such as drills, hammers and measuring tapes, and pretend to repair the window in the play-house. Children work well in groups as they learn to take turns on the slide and climbing block.

All staff have a secure knowledge and understanding of how to promote the learning and

development of young children. Journals and in-depth assessments of children's progress ensure that staff focus clearly on each individual child's next steps. This enables staff to appropriately identify and offer support to children with English as an additional language or children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. This means that all children make good progress relevant to their age and stage of development.

Parents are encouraged to be fully involved and receive good feedback about their children's progress. They provide valuable information to the nursery about their children's personal needs and their starting points. Parents are informed about the educational programme at the initial meeting, and regular newsletters and children's in-depth journals and assessments ensure that parents are consistently updated about their child's progress.

The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children

A well-established key person system helps children form secure attachments and promotes their well-being and independence. Staff are sensitive to children's relationships and ensure that another adult is at hand to take over and provide support. This means that children continue to be happy and settled. Good handovers at the start of the sessions between parents and staff enable children to feel secure.

The environment is warm and welcoming with a stimulating range of activities available to support children's all-round development. A good display of children's art work and the layout of the hall ensure that they feel valued and develop a strong sense of belonging. They move around free from harm as they participate in their chosen activity, developing their emotional well-being and promoting their independence. Children are learning to work cooperatively in small groups and enjoy talking about their friends.

Children behave very well and are becoming independent learners because staff are well deployed and intervene appropriately. They are familiar with boundaries and know that they need to wear a coat when going out into the garden. Staff give clear messages to children to ensure that they are developing a good understanding of why it is important to have a healthy diet and the need for exercise and fresh air. This enables them to competently manage their own personal hygiene as they access tissues and take themselves to the toilet. Children with English as an additional language are fully supported as parents are invited into the group to read books in their language to the group. This also helps all children to understand and respect other cultures and beliefs.

Children are well-prepared for the next stage in their learning because staff work very closely with the local school and other agencies.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision

Systems for monitoring the educational programme to ensure that children are given a broad range of experiences to help them progress to the early learning goals are good. Planning and assessment are routinely reviewed so that children's individual needs are identified and appropriate interventions are sought.

Staff have a good understanding of the welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. They demonstrate a good understanding of safeguarding children, and clear policies and procedures are known and understood by all staff. Self-evaluation is mostly effective and takes into account the views of staff, children and their parents. However, systems to evaluate practice and highlight the group's strengths and weaknesses are occasionally weak. Therefore, there is scope to improve systems to ensure children are consistently fully challenged.

Staff are supported very well by committee members and the group leader. An effective and well-established management performance procedure helps all staff to improve their knowledge and understanding of children's welfare and developmental needs. Partnerships with parents, external agencies and other providers are well established. Parents receive in-depth information about the group and the progress their children are making, which contributes to meeting children's individual needs. Appropriate interventions are secured and children receive additional support to help them make progress in their learning and development.

The Childcare Register

The requirements for the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are **Met**

The requirements for the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are **Met**

What inspection judgements mean

Registered early years provision

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	Outstanding provision is highly effective in meeting the needs of all children exceptionally well. This ensures that children are very well prepared for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 2	Good	Good provision is effective in delivering provision that meets the needs of all children well. This ensures children are ready for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	Satisfactory provision is performing less well than expectations in one or more of the key areas. It requires improvement in order to be good.
Grade 4	Inadequate	Provision that is inadequate requires significant improvement and/or enforcement. The provision is failing to give children an acceptable standard of early years education and/or is not meeting the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the

	Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be inspected again within 12 months of the date of this inspection.
Met	The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider continues to meet the requirements for registration.
Not Met	The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider does not meet the requirements for registration.

Inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of provision that is registered on the Early Years Register. The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and care, known as the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Setting details

Unique reference number	123565
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	889188
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 17
Total number of places	28
Number of children on roll	27
Name of provider	Saplings Pre-School
Date of previous inspection	29/03/2011
Telephone number	0798 5968 759

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Type of provision

For the purposes of this inspection the following definitions apply:

Full-time provision is that which operates for more than three hours. These are usually known as nurseries, nursery schools and pre-schools and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the higher fee for registration.

Sessional provision operates for more than two hours but does not exceed three hours in any one day. These are usually known as pre-schools, kindergartens or nursery schools and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the lower fee for registration.

Childminders care for one or more children where individual children attend for a period of more than two hours in any one day. They operate from domestic premises that are usually their own home. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Out of school provision may be sessional or full-time provision and is delivered before or after school and/or in the summer holidays. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. Where children receive their Early Years Foundation Stage in school these providers do not have to deliver the learning and development requirements in full but should complement the experiences children receive in school.

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