

Little Stars Pre-School

St Lukes Church, Cell Barnes Lane, St Albans, Hertfordshire, AL1 5PX

Inspection date

23/10/2012

Previous inspection date

02/03/2009

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This inspection:

2

Previous inspection:

3

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

- Staff are sensitive and responsive to the children's needs, feelings and interests. They work closely with parents through the key person system.
- Staff are highly skilled in ensuring that all children are well integrated and they are highly effective in taking steps to close identified gaps in children's achievements.
- Children clearly benefit and thrive as a result of the effective deployment of staff.
- Staff offer tailored guidance and information on precise ways parents and carers can support children's learning at home.

It is not yet outstanding because

- Staff do not fully promote or make the most of the opportunities for children to extend their learning in the outside area.
- Children have too few opportunities to use language to connect ideas and develop their thinking because staff do not always make good use of opportunities to ask open-ended questions.

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.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed activities in the pre-school room and the outside learning environment and talked with the staff and children.
- The inspector held discussions with the manager of the provision.
- The inspector looked at children's assessment records, planning documentation, the provider's self-evaluation form and a range of other documentation.
- The inspector also took account of the views of parents and carers spoken to on the day and information included in the self-evaluation form.

Inspector

Sheila Harrison

Full Report

Information about the setting

Little Stars Pre-School was registered in 2008 on the Early Years Register and is one of two settings owned by the provider. The setting operates from a large hall in St Luke's Church in St Albans, Hertfordshire. They use a cordoned-off area of the car park for outside play sessions. The hall is situated on the first floor of the building and there is no lift. Children come from the immediate and surrounding areas. The nursery is linked to Fleetville Children's Centre.

The pre-school is open term times only from 9am to 12noon Mondays to Fridays, and the afternoon sessions run from 12.30pm to 3pm on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 68 children on roll. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. It supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language and children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The pre-school employs 11 members of childcare staff. Of these, one holds a level 4 qualification and is undertaking a degree in early years. Seven staff hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 and two at level 2.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- develop opportunities for children to use language to connect ideas and develop their thinking by posing carefully framed open-ended questions during activities
- extend the range of outdoor learning experiences and organise the outdoor area to minimise disruption to children's play and learning from other users of the premises.

Inspection judgements

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

Staff build respectful and caring relationships with all the children and their families, and focus on children's learning and achievements. Their thoughtful care and attention help children make good progress overall, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those learning English as an additional language. A strong relationship develops between the parents and the key person. Staff use the information gained from parents and their own skilful observations to understand each child's stage of development. Staff complete regular and precise assessments of children and use them effectively to plan suitably challenging activities.

Staff are highly skilled in ensuring that all children are well integrated, and they are highly effective in taking steps to close identified gaps in children's achievements. They use their bilingual skills to help children feel valued, communicate and learn English. Staff promptly identify if a child needs additional support, sharing information and records with colleagues, parents and, where appropriate, other professionals to ensure that each child gets the help they need. Parents are kept well informed about their children's progress; they regularly see and contribute to their child's 'learning journey' record. Staff have highly

successful strategies for supporting children's learning at home. They provide packs of library books, practical tasks and writing books. Parents have commented how much they appreciate the packs, and say they can see their children making good progress.

Staff provide interesting and challenging experiences that meet the needs of all children. They plan a learning environment indoors that encourages a positive attitude to learning through rich and stimulating experiences. They ensure children have access to wide-ranging activities indoors that have depth and breadth across the seven areas of learning. Staff plan exciting cookery activities to allow children to experience the changes in ingredients as they mix them together. They are encouraged to use the rolling pin to make dough thin, and they stand near the kitchen smelling the biscuits as they bake. Such activities help children become ready for the next stage of learning and ready for school.

Staff provide interesting resources which are accessible and open ended so they can be used in a variety of ways and are relevant to children's interests. The indoor environment is abundant in environmental print, and a pictorial timetable helps the younger children independently access the activities. Staff support children to recognise their names through self-registration, and they develop children's awareness of writing systems other than English. They ensure that children have frequent opportunities to enjoy a wide range of books, songs and stories. Children build the foundations for literacy through the home-nursery library scheme. Staff encourage children to retell the stories and check their understanding. They encourage children to write their own names and skilfully ask children about their drawings and art work. Staff provide relaxed opportunities for children to develop spoken language through sustained conversations between adults and children. However, at times, some questioning of the children does not fully extend their language for thinking.

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

Staff ensure that the children are happy and fully involved in their play. Children are totally secure and form strong emotional attachments to the staff. The key person system ensures that children learn to be strong and independent through positive and consistent relationships. Children are learning to respect and tolerate each other's differences. They celebrate their own festivals and those of their friends, and they acknowledge the festivals of others. The contributions of the staff and parents to these celebrations are valued. Children recall the fun they had during a recent festival, staff and children dressed in traditional clothes, and staff and parents provided food specific to the festival.

Staff are good role models. They are deployed well, use consistently applied strategies and provide clear guidance for children about what is acceptable behaviour. Staff involve children in finding solutions to problems and conflicts. Staff praise the children appropriately, encouraging them to share and take turns. Staff encourage children to line up by the door, explaining the need keep themselves safe on the stairs by holding the hand rails. Staff help children to be tolerant of small waiting times by playing a game of pointing to various parts of their bodies including parts of the body the children are less familiar with, such as eyebrows. Staff model good positional language such as 'in front of' and 'behind'.

Staff work hard to ensure the children have daily access to the outside play area although, at times, children have to be moved to a safe area to allow cars to be moved from the car park. This disrupts children's learning as it affects opportunities for children to have time and freedom to become deeply involved in activities. In good weather, all the areas of learning are represented in the outdoor environment through the choice of equipment available to the children. At other times, the equipment covers mainly physical development. This does not fully reflect the different interests of children to allow them to be motivated and deeply involved in their learning.

Staff encourage children to develop their independence, and children can wash their hands in the mobile hand washing unit, butter their own toast and pour their own drinks. Children learn about the benefits of healthy eating during snack time as staff talk about the goodness in fruit which will help them fight colds and make them grow strong.

Children are well supported by their key person in the transition from the afternoon session to the morning session. They have access to a good range of books and stories to explore their feelings and prepare them for change. The setting has a highly effective relationship with the local school. Teachers visit the setting and work in partnership with staff, and this ensures that children are secure because the transition onto the next setting is sensitively handled.

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

Staff provide children with a safe, nurturing and secure environment, in which they receive sensitive care and attention. All staff work exceptionally well as a team. They are knowledgeable and enthusiastic with effective systems for performance management. The thorough and accurate self-evaluation system is the result of careful monitoring and analysis. This takes into account the views of staff, children and their parents. There is a good overview of the curriculum through monitoring of educational programmes to ensure a broad range of experiences to help children progress to the early learning goals. Planning and assessment are monitored to make sure they are consistent, and there is accurate recording of children's progress.

Partnerships with parents and external agencies are well established and make a strong contribution to meeting children's needs. Appropriate interventions are secured, and children receive the support they need. Parents are very welcome and encouraged to bring their skills into the setting. They speak very highly of the partnership with the staff, they say that their children are eager to attend and have a warm attachment to their key person and all the staff.

The drive for improvement is demonstrated by a clear and successful action plan. Strengths and weaknesses are effectively identified, and previous recommendations have been successfully addressed. The setting has applied to undertake a quality assurance scheme to effectively monitor the success of the setting.

Arrangements for safeguarding children are strong, regularly reviewed and carefully managed. All the records required for safe and efficient management of the early years provision and to meet children's needs are maintained and effective. The suitability and qualifications of all adults looking after children are ensured with robust recruitment processes and secure induction procedures. Effective processes are in place for identifying and supporting any child at risk of harm. The management monitors the ongoing suitability of all staff effectively through regular meetings and appraisals. New staff and volunteers undertake a thorough induction process, including full supervision of their practice until all checks are in place and staff are confident of their competence.

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	EY384344
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	821640
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 5
Total number of places	40
Number of children on roll	68
Name of provider	Caroline Ann George
Date of previous inspection	02/03/2009
Telephone number	07876 795 073

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

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.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2012

