

St Katherine's Pre-school

Barnfield Vale Academy, Wilbury Drive, DUNSTABLE, Bedfordshire, LU5 4QP

Inspection date

Previous inspection date

26/11/2012

Not Applicable

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This inspection:

2

Previous inspection:

Not Applicable

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	1
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

- An excellent range of activities is delivered at a fast pace to ensure children remain interested, engaged and motivated in their learning.
- Colourful mats, bright furniture and children's music playing in the background, make this classroom a friendly and welcoming environment for children and their parents.
- Safeguarding children is of paramount importance to the staff and robust procedures ensure that children are kept safe and feel secure.
- Staff understand how children learn. They effectively observe each child's development and learning, assess progress and plan for their next steps.
- Exceptional care practices ensure that children are happy and enjoy what they are doing. Relationships are outstanding at all levels and enable children to learn to be emotionally strong, independent and active learners.
- The nominated person provides strong leadership and regularly challenges the staff to think critically about their practice; encouraging them to work towards the highest possible standard of care and learning for children and take pride in what they do.

It is not yet outstanding because

- The pre-school has not consolidated practice in the new premises and the new manager has not been in post long enough to have effective systems for checking and monitoring the quality of the provision to secure continuous improvement.

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 classroom and in the garden. She spoke with staff and children.
- The inspector talked with the manager, the staff and the nominated person representing the committee.
- The inspector looked at children's observation and assessment records, planning sheets, evidence of suitability of staff working in the nursery, recent reports from the local authority advisers and some policies and other documentation.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents expressed in their feedback comments and evaluated parental responses to questionnaires.

Inspector

Susan Marriott

Full Report

Information about the setting

St Katherine's Pre-school was first registered in 1992 and moved into new premises based at Barnfield Vale Academy in June 2012. The pre-school is registered on the Early Years Register and is managed by a committee. It serves a popular housing estate on the eastern side of the town of Dunstable. Facilities include a large classroom, one smaller

room, a separate toilet and changing room area, canopied outside space and a large grass and block-paved outside garden.

The pre-school employs eight permanent members of staff. The manager is working towards a foundation degree in Early Years. The deputy and three other staff members hold relevant qualifications to level 3. One other staff member holds a level 2 qualification and two are unqualified. The staff team are supported by volunteers and an administrator. The pre-school is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance.

There are currently 33 children attending who are within the early years age group. The pre-school is open on weekday mornings during term-time only, from 9am until 12pm. There is a lunch club facility from 12pm to 1pm. The pre-school 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 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:

- continue to develop the monitoring of the on-going implementation of the Early Years Foundation Stage as the pre-school develops to ensure that staff continue to teach children effectively across the prime and specific areas of learning.

Inspection judgements

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

This well-established pre-school has successfully relocated to new premises within the grounds of a local school. Children benefit from a stimulating and colourful environment and a highly committed staff team who are wholly dedicated to the young children in their care. Staff teach children by ensuring challenging, playful opportunities across the seven areas of learning and development. There is lots of choice to keep children busy and interested in what they are doing. Consequently, children become active learners who display the characteristics of effective learning.

Many activities include learning across all areas and all are supported by excellent adult interaction which promotes all aspects of children's developing communication and language. For example, children play a 'sound lotto' game and staff question children to assess their level of understanding about such things as owls and the seaside. Lots of

open-ended questions make children think critically and they begin to solve problems for themselves. For example, staff know that the children really love the soft, giant building bricks for construction. They ask children to identify the colours and count to 10, talking about which bricks have smiles and eyes painted on them. Through the constant conversation, it is clear that staff know when to stand back and let the children solve their own problems. Children build up their tower and staff ask 'What comes next?', allowing them to work out how the bricks fit together. The lovely interaction continues and staff ask 'Why did they fall?' Staff encourage children to persevere with their task and wait patiently as children run off and then return to complete the challenge.

Children develop their imaginations and solve more problems through thoughtfully planned role play in the tinsel-decorated Christmas post office. They work out how to wrap parcels of varying shapes and sizes and put them into the post box. They 'write' letters and stamp them. Children become familiar with technology as they use the keyboard, telephone and the cash register. Staff read books on request and bring popular stories to life through art and crafts. Children visit the main school to see the chickens who apparently 'eat lots of food' and the fish in the tank where 'there are lots of bubbles'. Staff then link these experiences to other books and encourage the children to explore colour, pattern, shape and size. Lively singing sessions, supported by picture cards to help everyone join in with 'Two fat sausages', ensure that children learn about counting and numbers in an enjoyable, fun way. Children are keen to learn new Christmas themed words to the popular 'Wheels on the bus' tune and are kept purposefully occupied with other rhymes while others take turns to visit the toilets before snack.

Since moving from the old premises, children are really benefitting from free flow access to a fantastic, stimulating outdoor area where there is lots of choice of activity and space to ride bikes and run on the field. A photograph album shows the extensive range of activities covered since the pre-school moved to the new site. These include bark rubbing, planting, shaving foam messy play, making music with saucepans on fence and balancing on tyres set into the grass. Children particularly enjoy the meadow area, where an expanse of long grass is fenced off and used to promote children's curiosity about the world, through bug hunts and finding hidden dinosaurs. Staff move between the indoor and outdoor area with the children and join in with play to promote learning. For example, some children want to be outdoors even though it is raining and those new to the setting show curiosity in the hoops. A staff member shows them what can be done with a hoop and gives lots of enthusiastic praise for their efforts. They spot a worm on the patio and she makes the most of the opportunity to extend the children's understanding of worms and where they live. She teaches children to value living things by discouraging the children from stamping on the worm and talking about the worm's feelings.

Every child is assigned a key person who makes regular observations of their progress. The key person observes children as they play and learns from the parents about what the child does at home. They identify possible areas in which to challenge and extend children's current learning and development using the Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage guidance. They know all of the children extremely well and identify where the child may be in their own developmental pathway. The pre-school is using the Central Bedfordshire format for the progress check at age two and sharing this with parents appropriately.

Children's particular interests and next steps are reflected in the planning and their individual needs are discussed as necessary at the highly valued Friday afternoon 'Reflection meeting'. For example, staff discuss any concerns about individual behaviour or speech and language matters which may have been noted during the week. In this way, the individual needs of all children are met well and appropriate interventions are sought to ensure that no child gets left behind and that any gaps are closed quickly. Parents are well informed about their child's progress and settling in and can tell the staff about their child's praiseworthy achievements at home via the 'Wow' board. Edward is the pre-school bear who lives at pre-school but loves to visit the children in their homes or go on holiday with them. He provides an enjoyable context for sharing information from home with pre-school staff.

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

There is a stimulating, exceptionally well-resourced and welcoming environment, both indoors and out which supports children's all round development and emotional well-being, providing a range of experiences that develop children's growing independence and cooperation. Staff organise everything to help children to learn to be independent and encourage them to manage their own personal needs. Consequently, children are highly competent at managing their personal needs relevant to their ages. They put on their own coats and boots to go outside and access tissues on a low table beside the entrance door.

The well-advertised key person system ensures children form secure attachments with highly skilled and sensitive staff, giving excellent support for their well-being and independence. Children bond quickly with their key person and can choose an alternative key person to the one allocated if they prefer. Relationships are exceptionally strong at all levels and children are learning to respect and tolerate each other's differences. Children show great restraint during activities, staff are universally consistent and provide very clear guidance about what is acceptable behaviour. For example, children interrupt another who is playing on an individual basis with a staff member. They are welcomed into the activity and are reminded that 'we do not throw bricks because someone may get hurt on the head'.

All staff have an excellent understanding of how to keep children safe and give the highest priority to the safety of children. They effectively support children's developing understanding of how to keep themselves safe and healthy. Staff give clear messages to children to ensure they are developing a good understanding of why it is important to have a healthy diet. Children are offered an exceptionally wide range of fruit such as kiwi, mandarin segments, apple and banana from which to choose at snack time. They talk with staff about the various fruits and the health benefits of eating fruit and vegetables. Staff encourage children to think about where the fruit comes from and how it is grown, extending their understanding of the wider world in which we live. Breadsticks are also available and children are offered milk or water to drink. Staff have already identified scope to enhance opportunities to extend children's independence by including them in setting the tables and washing up.

Children gain a very good understanding of the need for physical exercise both indoors and out. Children playing on the sit and rides are challenged by staff to race each other to the gate. They excitedly take up the challenge and then they talk about their legs being tired from the exercise. The strong skills of the staff ensure that children are well prepared for the next stage in their learning. They encourage the children to become familiar with the facilities of the host school and use opportunities such as the achievement display in the main school to stimulate talk about their hopes and dreams for the future. A thorough grounding in the seven areas of learning provides high levels of support to prepare children for good future progress through school and life.

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

A highly motivated and enthusiastic, newly appointed manager drives the development of the pre-school. She benefits from being able to work alongside the outgoing manager for two days per week to share innovation and expertise, providing valuable continuity for staff, children and parents. However, the pre-school is still settling into the new premises and the new manager has been in post for one week. She has not yet devised systems for checking and monitoring the quality of the provision nor is she able to demonstrate their effectiveness over time. The nominated person provides exceptionally passionate and strong leadership. She makes extensive use of the Ofsted website to gain ideas from reading reports about other provisions. She brings in ideas for consideration and questions staff about how and why they do things in the way that they do. This ensures that staff analyse their practice in an open and honest way and come up with innovative solutions to identified problems. For example, nappy changing facilities have been improved upon and provide well-organised space for staff and increased privacy for older children.

The strong team ethic helps to maintain a high standard and ensure communication is a two-way process between parents, others and the staff. The 'Friday Reflection' meetings are very important to the staff and they constantly evaluate their practice, taking appropriate action to address identified issues and taking into account the views of parents. For example, the area for the parents to wait with their children prior to the start of the session has been moved further away from the road to improve children's safety. Children are now gathered together in the main classroom prior to the end of the session to enable the staff to have greater control over the transfer of responsibility at collection times.

Safeguarding children is a priority of the pre-school. Regular training and information updates ensure that all staff know what action to take in the event of a concern arising. Reference materials and information about safeguarding procedures are displayed prominently in the pre-school and are shared with parents. Staff are well aware of, and comply with, the mobile phone and camera procedure, placing their phones in a designated box in the locked cupboard, while on duty in the setting. Evidence of staff vetting checks is available, recruitment procedures are robust and induction processes are in place. Security of the premises is excellent. The identity of visitors is checked and their

presence recorded. Thoughtfully installed physical barriers to unauthorised entry, effective risk assessment and superb adult supervision secure children's safety.

Partnerships with the host school are very good and the head teacher is keen to offer whatever support she can to the pre-school, recognising that the introduction of the pre-school on the school site has a very significant part to play in the long term development of the school. Long-established and traditional links with other receiving schools in the east of the town are being maintained through exchange visits and effective liaison. Parents are provided with lots of good quality information on site and in a format that they can take away with them. For example, they can help themselves to booklets about the Early Years Foundation Stage. Parents are delighted with the pre-school and comment 'My children really enjoy pre-school and get upset when they are poorly and cannot come....they have become a lot more outgoing....brilliant pre-school...very happy all round!'

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	EY448107
Local authority	Central Bedfordshire
Inspection number	800334
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	2 - 5
Total number of places	24
Number of children on roll	33
Name of provider	St Katherine's Pre-school
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable
Telephone number	07812696287

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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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