

Playschool Nursery

Playschool House, Alma Road, St Albans, Hertfordshire, AL1 3AR

Inspection date	14/10/2013
Previous inspection date	22/05/2012

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	2
	Previous inspection:	1
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's safety and overall well-being is promoted because effective recruitment, induction and performance management systems support staff in improving their knowledge, understanding and practice. Consequently, the safeguarding and welfare requirements are met.
- The majority of staff are highly motivated by the management team who demonstrate a strong drive for continuous improvement. Highly effective self-evaluation enables staff to quickly identify and consistently improve their practice.
- Children's communication skills are well promoted through regularly planned and spontaneous opportunities for them to speak and be listened to. Consequently, children's language development is good.
- Children build strong bonds and attachments with staff and peers. As a result, they are happy, settled and behave well.

It is not yet outstanding because

- In the room for two-year-olds, the staffing arrangements and the organisation of the lunchtime period does not fully meet the needs of the children and learning opportunities are missed. Consequently, children do not consistently learn about the importance of good hygiene, nor are they effectively engaged in a range of rich, varied and interesting experiences.

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
- scheduled more frequently where Ofsted identifies a need to do so, for example where provision was previously judged 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 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
- scheduled 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 compulsory part of the Childcare Register. This report includes a judgment about compliance with the requirements of that register.

Inspection activities

- The inspector spoke with the nursery owners, staff and children at appropriate times throughout the inspection.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation with the nursery owner.
- The inspector looked at a wide range of documentation including policies, procedures and children's learning journals.
- The inspector observed activities in all base rooms and the outside area of the nursery.

Inspector

Jo Rowley

Full Report

Information about the setting

Playschool Nursery is one of two nurseries which are privately owned. It was registered in 2011 on the Early Years Register and the compulsory part of the Childcare Register. The nursery operates from a converted school building in St Albans, Hertfordshire. There is an enclosed area available for outdoor play. There is a parent car park to the side of the building and a covered area where buggies can be stored.

The nursery opens Monday to Friday all year round except bank holidays. Sessions are from 7.30am until 6.30pm. Full time and sessional care is offered and children may attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 85 children on roll in the early years age. The nursery supports children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 27 members of childcare staff. Of these, five hold an appropriate early years qualification at level 2 and 11 at level 3 or above. Three members of staff hold the Early Years Professional Status. The nursery receives support from the local authority.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- review the staffing arrangements at lunchtime in the room for the two-year-olds, in order to strengthen the quality of teaching and learning

- extend opportunities for young children to develop their understanding of how to stay healthy through adopting good hygiene routines, for example, by covering their mouths when coughing and sneezing.

Inspection judgements

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

Staff demonstrate a good understanding of the Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage and use guidance to plan for the prime and specific areas of learning. Observations and assessments are precisely completed and demonstrate how all children, including those with English as an additional language, are developing comfortably within the typical range of development expected for their ages. Children across the nursery take part in activities that are fun, interesting and are planned effectively to include their next steps. As a result, children are making good progress overall and their readiness for school is promoted well. However, in the room for two-year-olds, while more experienced staff are focused on the daily routines of clearing away beds and nappy changing after lunch

time, less experienced staff are left to supervise the children. Although there are toys and resources set out, all the children are gathered together to look at books on the carpet and opportunities for teaching are lost.

Children's early communication and language skills are strongly promoted because staff give time for children to speak and be listened to. For example, in the baby room children are warmly encouraged to use their voices as staff encourage communication through nonverbal actions, such as clapping and smiling. Babies respond happily to staff by babbling and squealing in delight. Older children are fully encouraged and well supported to speak in front of their peers. For example, during group activities in the pre-school room children are praised for clearly describing the objects they find during a phonics session. Children's interests are captured as they take part in a range of activities both in and outside of the nursery. They are motivated to join in because staff demonstrate a secure knowledge and understanding of how to promote the learning and development of all children.

Children are developing in the prime and specific areas of learning throughout the nursery because most staff practice is good. They provide a range of interesting and challenging experiences which are often child-initiated and enjoyed by all. For example, in the pre-school room children are currently learning about space and planets because some children recently demonstrated an interest in this area. They learn about the various planets, develop new words and demonstrate high levels of concentration as they create their own space ships. Staff promote children's physical development through a range of activities, such as when the younger children are outside. They are fully supported and encouraged to use various resources to develop their skills in walking while older children's ability to climb is fully encouraged. As a result, children are engaged and their attention is captured for longer periods of time.

Children who speak English as an additional language are making good progress. This is because staff are effective in promoting partnership working with parents, carers and other professionals. As a result, strong relationships with parents enable staff to effectively settle children into the setting and this ensures that children are consistently supported. Parents are thoroughly included in the setting because they are encouraged to be part of their children's learning and development. Staff request starting points from parents and share regularly the progress and achievements their children are making. For example, development reviews are carried out by staff, with parents, to discuss children's interests at home and their overall developmental progress. Children's personal, social and emotional development is effective because staff consistently encourage children throughout the nursery. Children are praised for being cooperative and sharing with their peers. As a result, children's self-confidence and self-awareness is well-promoted. Children are challenged through spontaneous and planned activities to ensure that they have the key skills needed for the next steps in their learning. For example, staff use relevant questioning techniques during story time to encourage children's thinking further. As a result, children are engaged in their learning.

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

A well-established key person system helps children to form secure attachments and bonds with staff and peers. Children are happy, spend their time purposefully and their relationships are strong because staff communicate effectively with children to support their overall well-being. For example, babies genuinely smile, demonstrating a sense of security as familiar staff enter the room. Good care practices ensure that children feel emotionally secure in their surroundings and their personal, social and emotional development is promoted. As a result, they settle in to their new surroundings with ease. Additionally, as children move rooms within the nursery staff provide parents with the opportunity to discuss the move in greater detail. This gives parents an opportunity to see where their children are going, ask questions and meet any new staff their children may be with. As a result, partnerships with parents are promoted and children are effectively supported by a well-organised key person system.

Children's independence is particularly well promoted from an early age. For example, young children are encouraged with routines, such as, hand washing before meal times while older children are genuinely praised as they serve their own meals at lunch times. Children's behaviour is good because staff provide clear guidance and boundaries, which include some 'golden rules' as part of the behaviour management policy. Consequently, children understand from a young age that when staff blow the whistle in their room, it means they need to stop what they are doing and listen. Children learn to be kind to one another and play together with their peers as they share resources. For example, staff encourage turn taking with a range of resources in the sensory room. As a result, children demonstrate an understanding of appropriate behaviour.

Children learn about being healthy as they are encouraged to try a range of fresh and nutritious meals, prepared in the nursery by the chef. Additionally, staff are vigilant in ensuring that children's individual dietary requirements are met. Children are given regular opportunities for fresh air and exercise as they use the well-equipped outside area and access fresh drinking water throughout the day. Older children are competent at managing their personal needs, and staff ensure that every child has their own individual bedding to avoid cross infection. However, in the room for two-year-olds children are not always reminded by staff of the importance of good hygiene. For example, they are not consistently encouraged to cover their mouths when coughing and sneezing.

The nursery provides children of all ages with a very good range of toys, resources and equipment. Children are warmly welcomed into the setting and base rooms are decorated with bright and stimulating wall displays. Babies have specific areas, such as a cosy corner, outside area and a specific black and white area in which they can experience a range of images, resources and contrasting visuals to stimulate their development in a safe environment. Children's safety is well supported because staff carry out daily risk assessments to ensure that the environment is safe. Children learn about the importance of keeping themselves safe through, for example, visits from the local police and fire brigade.

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

Leadership and management is strong because the nursery management team are successful in delivering a broad and deep programme of learning for all children attending. However, the quality of provision falls short of the usually high standard, at lunch time in the room for two-year-olds. This is because staffing arrangements, roles and responsibilities are not clearly defined during this period. All legal requirements of the Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage are well met and staff are securely supported by a management team with an excellent vision. Robust recruitment and induction procedures mean that most staff are consistent in their approach, they are highly skilled and strongly motivated. They receive an intense induction, which is sharply focused on providing ongoing, excellent practice. Management provide regular supervision, which is of a high quality and staff are consistently encouraged to improve their knowledge, understanding and practice. For example, all staff are currently taking part in some form of training to further develop their knowledge and understanding. As a result, the nursery's reflective practice meetings provide valuable and accurately detailed feedback on the needs of staff.

The safeguarding and welfare requirements are remarkably well met because staff suitability is secured through an extensive range of checks carried out by the nursery. For example, the nursery adhere to the safer recruitment guide which includes the requirement for references and a Disclosure and Barring Service check. Furthermore, there are rigorous organisational procedures to ensure that lone working is never permitted. For example, the nursery employs a range of qualified staff which are supernumery, as well as an Early Years Foundation Stage quality assurance coordinator to promote and monitor nursery practice. Staff demonstrate an very good understanding of how to safeguard children at the nursery and are skilled in quickly identifying children's needs. Additional safeguarding training is completed on a regular basis and staff are required to consistently update and refresh their knowledge of the nursery's safeguarding policy and procedure.

Consistent opportunities are provided to ensure that every member of staff is encouraged to feed into the nursery's self-evaluation through reflective practice meetings. This means that staff are actively involved in sharing their ideas and experiences, which leads to greater, continuous improvement. Parents are enthusiastically encouraged to feed their views into self-evaluation at handover times or during developmental reviews. Additionally, children's views and opinions are always incorporated through discussion and planning of activities. Children's learning is frequently monitored and evaluated to ensure that progress is consistently made. Children's learning journals, observations, planning and assessments are consistently analysed through online systems to identify and narrow any potential gaps. Relationships with other providers delivering the Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage are excellent. For example, the nursery ensures that children have the best possible experiences through multi-agency working. For example, staff will work closely with area special educational needs coordinators, early years teachers and health visitors. As a result, children's individual progress is significantly improved.

The Childcare Register

The requirements for the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are

Met

What inspection judgements mean

Registered early years provision

Grade	Judgement	Description
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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 action. 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	EY438929
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	935580
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 8
Total number of places	82
Number of children on roll	85
Name of provider	Playschool Nursery (St Albans) LLP
Date of previous inspection	22/05/2012
Telephone number	01727844477

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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, which are usually the childminder's 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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