

Children 1st

St. Peter's School, Cottonmill Lane, ST. ALBANS, Hertfordshire, AL1 1HL

Inspection date	23/10/2013
Previous inspection date	22/09/2008

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	3
	Previous inspection:	2
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		3
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		3
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		3

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision is satisfactory

- Staff have secure understanding of how to support children's learning and development through appropriate teaching. As a result, children enjoy their time at the nursery and make sound progress in their learning and development.
- Children are happy and grow in confidence because of the good quality, positive relationships they have with all the staff and their key person.
- Staff have strong and successful working relationships with other agencies and professionals to help them maintain a suitable level of expertise. This supports children's successful move into school.

It is not yet good because

- Management of the setting is not fully robust. As a result, some requirements are not fully met, particularly in relation to the action taken when there is an allegation about a member of staff and the reporting of significant events to Ofsted.
- There are gaps in the monitoring of children's individual progress, leading to a lack of planned activities to help some children's development of physical skills.
- Initial assessments on children as they start at the pre-school do not fully include parents' contributions about what their children already know and can do. This means that staff do not have precise information about children's starting points.

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.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed activities in the classrooms and the outside learning environment and talked with the staff and children.
- The inspector held discussions with the registered providers and undertook a joint observation.
- The inspector looked at a sample of children's assessment records and a range of other documentation.
- The inspector also took account of the views of parents and carers spoken to on the day.

Inspector

Sheila Harrison

Full Report

Information about the setting

Children 1st opened in 2004 and is on the Early Years Register. It is privately owned and operates within the premises of St Peter's Primary School in St. Albans. The pre-school has sole access, while open, to the early years classrooms and fenced outside area.

The pre-school employs six members of childcare staff. Of these, five hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 and above, including three with foundation degrees.

The pre-school opens Monday to Friday during term time only. Sessions are from 1pm until 4pm with an optional lunch club from 12noon. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 44 children on roll who are in the early years age group. The pre-school provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-olds. It supports children who speak English as an additional language.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

To meet the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage the provider must:

- ensure the provider and managers continue to have a clear understanding of the safeguarding and reporting procedures, especially in relation to any allegation made against an adult who cares for the children or is in regular contact with them, and the reporting of significant incidents to Ofsted
- ensure the development of children's physical skills by monitoring the planning and assessment process and then shaping learning experiences to support individual children's learning and development in this prime area.

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

- develop further the relationships with parents and carers to fully involve them in their children's learning and development, enabling them to offer their contributions about what their children already know and can do at home.

Inspection judgements

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

Staff generally find out about the children by gathering some information from parents about what the child can do and what they are interested in. This contributes to establishing some of children's starting points and capabilities, but it is not robust enough to enhance the planning for children's future learning to ensure that it is based on a complete picture of each child's individual development in a timely manner. Following the settling-in process, staff make precise observations and assessments of the children's progress during their time in the setting. However, staff do not always use the information gained to fully recognise and plan to address the gaps in children's achievements, specifically in their physical development.

Staff ensure that all areas of learning are available in the well-resourced indoor and outside environments. This provides for interesting and challenging play experiences. Staff use effective teaching methods to help children make suitable progress. They are skilled at asking open-ended questions and being a good role model. Staff show the children that they are curious and need to find out more. This encourages children to develop their own ideas, begin to solve problems and develop new skills. Staff introduce three-dimensional modelling linked to children's interest in traditional tales. They help the children decide what they would like to make and discuss the size and shapes of the boxes required. Staff support the children's ability to think about the properties of different types of fixing material, and children learn to use glue and sticky tape effectively. This type of teaching is a significant strength of the pre-school and means children are ready for the next stage of their learning and eventually for school.

Children's language skills are suitably promoted. They enjoy books of traditional tales and they act out favourite stories using the dressing up materials. Staff are well deployed to help children with their emerging speech and language skills. They make good use of props when telling stories, and facial expressions help children learning English as an additional language to develop their understanding. Staff introduce home languages in children's play as they listen to nursery rhymes in various languages on the interactive white board. Children have many chances to experience technological toys. They enjoy playing with the radio controlled toys outside.

Each child has a scrapbook of photographs detailing their time in the pre-school. Staff are available to talk to parents on request to show and explain details of their child's learning record. The pre-school has a library system for the older children and plans to extend a similar system for the younger children to help develop their learning at home.

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

Children benefit from close relationships with the staff, including their key person. This helps them to settle quickly and feel secure. Staff help young children to begin to relate to other children to develop their personal and emotional development. They encourage children to explore their surroundings and become independent in their self-care skills. Staff provide adequate guidance to help children learn what is acceptable behaviour. They sensitively encourage children to make friends, share and take turns. Children sit together for meals and this helps them develop good social skills.

Staff provide a suitable range of play equipment to support children's independent learning and development. Children can freely choose the resources that enable them to return to and reinforce their learning. For example, they spend a great deal of time exploring what happens when cars are pushed down the slope between the classroom and conservatory. Staff make regular use of the enclosed outdoor play environment to offer different learning experiences, which adds to children's enjoyment. Children enjoy making patterns by lining up the small hoops. They use a wide range of writing materials outside, including paper on clipboards and easily cleanable white boards with pens.

Children are learning about healthy living as staff encourage them to eat the savoury items in their lunch boxes first. Children are offered healthy snacks and they take home a piece of fruit, which helps them discuss healthy eating with their parents. Children learn about safety as they are given regular reminders, such as not leaving the table before finishing their meal. Staff explain the consequences of their actions, such as they may hurt themselves or their friends if they run indoors. Children are learning the newly introduced 'house rules' for the use of the challenging play equipment in the garden that will help them to take manageable risks and stay safe.

The pre-school uses the same premises as the school nursery. Children use the same equipment and follow a similar routine. They meet and form strong relationships with the staff and children in the school and this helps them move confidently on to school when the time comes.

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

Overall, secure safeguarding arrangements are now in place. The management takes action to protect children in their care. However, management is not fully proactive in ensuring their procedures are fully followed. The inspection took place following notification of a safeguarding issue. The inspection found that the providers respond promptly in the event of an allegation made against a member of staff and also when children have an accident at the setting. The providers immediately undertook a comprehensive review to ensure that they have a full awareness of the requirements in the Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage. Staff take strong action after an accident, renewing the risk assessments in light of new outdoor equipment. They complete specific risk assessments to meet the needs of individual children in their care to make sure the environment is safe and suitable. Staff remain vigilant at all times and supervise children well. However, the reporting procedures followed were not fully in line with the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. These breaches of the requirements did not have a significant impact on the children and an action is raised at this inspection to address this issue. Staff undertake training in child protection and are clear about their duty to raise any concerns to protect children in their care. They understand the various ways to raise any concerns and speak out if they have any concerns about the practice in the setting.

There are suitable procedures in place for recruiting staff and maintaining their continuing suitability to care for children. Staff have regular appraisals and are eager to undertake in-

service training. They are enthusiastic and demonstrate a sound understanding of their responsibilities for implementing the learning and development requirements. Staff regularly discuss children's development and further plans. This means that the providers are able to help staff support children's learning so they make progress.

The pre-school is committed to evaluating and improving their service to children and families. Staff value the advice and support of other professionals to evaluate and improve the learning outcomes for children. There is further planned training in safeguarding and behaviour management, and this will assist staff in meeting the individual needs of the children. The replies to the parental questionnaire are suitably evaluated and plans are put in place to strengthen areas for improvement. Parents comment how happy they and their children are. They state that they feel children are very well prepared for school.

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 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	EY279966
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	940051
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 5
Total number of places	30
Number of children on roll	44
Name of provider	Children 1st Partnership
Date of previous inspection	22/09/2008
Telephone number	01727 853075

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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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