

Little Saplings Pre-School

Goldington Green Lower School, Goldington Road, BEDFORD, MK41 0DP

Inspection date

13/01/2014

Previous inspection date

22/09/2010

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

- Partnerships with parents and carers are strong as information is regularly shared between the key person and parents. As a result, children's learning is comprehensive and tailored to meet their needs.
- Children form strong bonds with staff and peers and thoroughly enjoy their time at pre-school. Therefore children's personal, social and emotional attachments are secure and children are confident learners.
- High quality resources are in place to ensure the children have access to stimulating and interesting play opportunities. The well thought out garden area is a particular strength of the pre-school and children have plenty of fresh air and exercise, therefore, promoting their physical development.
- Children's communication and language development is encouraged because staff ask good quality open-ended questions and allow the children time to respond.
- Safeguarding procedures are effective. This ensures that children are protected and kept safe from harm.

It is not yet outstanding because

- There is scope to further develop children's independence skills, for example, by consistently allowing children to serve themselves food and drink.
- Monitoring of the daily routines is not always sufficiently robust to take account of the needs of the two year olds who are new to the setting.

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 was accompanied by a monitoring inspector and she observed activities in the pre-school and talked with the staff.
- The inspector viewed the areas of the premises and outside areas used for child care.
- The inspector looked at children's assessment records, planning documentation and evidence of suitability of staff.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents as recorded from verbal conversations.
- The inspector reviewed the pre-school's hardcopy self-evaluation form as provided.

Inspector
Kate Hogan

Full report

Information about the setting

Little Saplings Pre-School is registered on the Early Years Register and is managed by a voluntary management committee. It originally opened 30 years ago and was re-registered when it relocated to its current premises in October 2007. It operates from a mobile classroom unit within the grounds of Goldington Green Academy, Bedford. It is open each weekday during term-time and sessions are from 9am to 11.30am and 12.30pm to 3.30pm, with the option of a lunch club. The pre-school also offers extended care, with sessions from 8am to 9am and 3.30pm to 4pm. All children have access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 61 children aged from two to under five years on roll, most of whom receive funding for early years education. The pre-school serves the local and neighbouring communities. It currently supports a number of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and is able to support children who are learning English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs seven members of staff, all of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications. The pre-school has achieved the 'Aiming for Quality' accreditation through the Pre-school Learning Alliance. It works in close partnership with the adjoining primary school.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- increase opportunities for children to be more independent, for example, by consistently allowing them to pour their own drinks and serve their own snacks
- strengthen the daily routines to incorporate younger children's adjustment to pre-school, for example, by thorough monitoring of how they settle and adapt to the routines, enabling staff to meet their needs accordingly.

Inspection judgements

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

The majority of teaching is better than good as staff fully understand the Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage. Resources cover all seven areas of learning and children are very engaged in activities. Children are regularly observed and

the information captured is used effectively to plan a wide range of challenging activities to promote the next steps in children's learning and development. Staff have high expectations of children and as a result, all children, including those with English as an additional language, are making good progress from their starting points and capabilities. The outside area of the pre-school is well thought out and children have regular opportunities for fresh air and exercise, which promotes their physical development. Staff interact well with children, valuing what they say and giving time for them to speak and be listened to. For example, staff promote eye contact with children when they are talking with them and they give children opportunities to express their thoughts before moving on. As a result, children gain confidence around others and their personal, social and emotional development is supported very well. Additionally, children's ideas are listened to and they have opportunities to think critically.

Children's communication and language, including those with English as an additional language, is supported by staff who use flashcards, pictures, sign language and words from other languages at key points during the day. As a result, all children have the opportunity to communicate with staff and peers and be listened to. Staff use clear words and children repeat and absorb these. For example, at story time staff explain more complicated words, such as, 'enormous' and 'illustrator' so that the children understand them and are more engaged in the story. Children are frequently challenged in their mathematical skills by staff asking them to count numbers and then asking children to add and take away. Children's understanding of the world is appropriately enhanced. For example, a sunflower in the garden has now died and staff leave it in the ground so that the children can learn about decay. Children are challenged appropriately in daily activities, such as, matching numbers on a computer programme. The pre-school has weekly targets for older children, such as, putting on their own coats. When a child is able to do this they receive praise in the form of a certificate and sticker to take home. Therefore, children are supported in school readiness and make the transition to school well.

Partnerships with parents are good and well supported because staff consistently involve parents in all aspects of their child's development at pre-school. For example, learning journals are clear and are frequently sent home to parents for comments. A full background is sought about each child prior to attending pre-school and several settling-in sessions are held. As a result, children feel confident in starting pre-school and the staff have a good understanding of the child's likes and dislikes. There are consultation evenings held regularly, a review after the child has attended for three weeks and regular contact is promoted between staff and parents. Additionally, home observations are requested by staff to encourage parents to share their children's achievements from home. This supports staff's knowledge of each child and helps them to plan more effectively for individual children. Parents are happy with the staff at the pre-school and share their positive thoughts about the way in which all the staff support their children. As a result, children's learning and development is effectively promoted because of this consistent approach.

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

Children form good relationships with their friends and play together enthusiastically. For example, in free play they use their imaginations in the home corner to role play different scenarios, such as, sweeping and cleaning the house. Children are supported and encouraged to take the lead in pretend play with adults, for example, by playing hairdressers with a member of staff and choosing how to style her hair. Behaviour is managed well by staff and children are kind to one another. They are encouraged to help tidy away the toys before carpet time and follow the routine that they have learnt. Younger children sometimes find the routines difficult to follow at first, therefore, their settling-in to pre-school is not as good as it could be at times. Children get a good sense of belonging at the pre-school. They all wear a uniform, have their own coat pegs and boot space and belong to an animal themed key group. They become actively engaged in activities within their groups and most join in enthusiastically. Staff support children's personal, social and emotional development by using strong questioning skills to encourage children's critical thinking. This ensures that children's self-confidence and self-esteem is very high.

The key person system is well established and robust. Information is shared frequently between parents and the key person via consultations, assessments and face-to-face discussions. Consequently, children and their parents have strong links with staff and close relationships are formed. Staff demonstrate they know the children well and use this knowledge to effectively plan and promote activities that are suited to individual children. Children settle at the pre-school with ease and separate from their parents and carers readily. Children feel safe and secure while at pre-school as staff make them aware of risks. For example, a toaster is used at snack time and staff discuss with children about why they must not touch it. As a result, children's understanding of their personal safety is good.

Children independently follow good hygiene routines and are reminded to wash their hands before eating and after using the toilet. They confidently blow their own noses and dispose of tissues appropriately. A variety of food is offered to the children at snack time and in the summer children have the opportunity to eat food that they have grown in the vegetable patch. This is further developed over lunchtime when staff sit with children and talk to them about where the food in their lunchboxes has come from. This ensures that children understand where food comes from and they enjoy the social aspects of eating together. However, staff do not always offer children the opportunity to practise their independence skills as drinks are often poured for them and food is always served by the adult. Parents are helped to understand healthy eating as information is shared by the pre-school on what type of food should go into lunchboxes. Children take part in exercise daily and have access to a large garden with plenty of stimulating resources within it. The toys inside the pre-school are equally of a high quality and cover all aspects of learning and development. As a result, children develop healthy lifestyles while at the pre-school.

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

Children are very well protected because staff ensure that they are vigilant when it comes to protecting the children in their care. There is a designated safeguarding person in place, along with two deputies who can act in her absence. All other staff have attended safeguarding training. Effective recruitment and induction processes are in place. For example, all staff complete a Disclosure and Barring Service check prior to joining and the manager ensures that they sign a declaration annually to keep this information current. There is a strong and well-established team at the pre-school, which benefits the children in that they are experienced in a wide range of childcare areas. The manager conducts a short overview of the day at the start of each session, where staff are reminded of key information, such as, who is on first aid duty, which children need additional support and who is responsible for the register. This ensures that staff have a clear knowledge of the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the children in their care. Ratios are well maintained and children have good access to adults throughout their time at pre-school, ensuring that they are safe.

Staff attend regular training courses and are all qualified appropriately. They have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities and are keen to keep updated in child development changes. The manager conducts regular supervisions of staff and an annual appraisal. Feedback is actively encouraged amongst the team in the form of anonymous observations. These are then reviewed by the manager and acted upon. This ensures that high standards are maintained in the pre-school. The manager monitors learning journals and observes staff practice to ensure that all children are treated equally and are progressing in their next steps. Staff work well together and the positive environment has a direct impact upon the children by being warm and welcoming. Consequently, children are effectively supported to ensure that they make good progress in their learning and development. The pre-school has developed since their last inspection by introducing effective cohort tracking systems. There are plans in place to further develop the outside area by building a soft play section in order to help children to continue to make progress in their already good physical development skills.

Partnerships with outside agencies and other providers are very good. The pre-school works closely with the adjoining school and shares transition plans about children's abilities with them. There are also close links with speech therapists and special needs coordinators, who work with the pre-school and parents when there is a child with a particular need. Parents are engaged and share information from home frequently. The ability to evaluate within the pre-school is good, for example, both parents and children complete regular questionnaires that feedback strengths and areas of possible improvement to the pre-school. Children enjoy attending and ask their parents questions, such as, 'When am I going to pre-school again?' There is also input from the local authority, which shows clear areas for development in the future.

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	Requires improvement	The provision is not giving children a good standard of early years education and/or there are minor breaches of the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be monitored and inspected within twelve months of the date of this inspection.
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 monitored and inspected again within six 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	EY363103
Local authority	Bedford Borough
Inspection number	863769
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 5
Total number of places	30
Number of children on roll	61
Name of provider	Little Saplings Preschool
Date of previous inspection	22/09/2010
Telephone number	07930 882076

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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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