

St Albans Pre School

St. Albans Community Centre, St. Albans Road, SMETHWICK, West Midlands, B67 7NL

Inspection date

07/03/2014

Previous inspection date

05/07/2010

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

- Children make good progress in all aspects of their learning and development, supported by well-qualified and knowledgeable staff, who extend children's learning through effective teaching and well-planned activities and experiences.
- Staff create a bright and motivating environment both indoors and outdoors and offer an inclusive and welcoming service for all children. They praise and encourage children throughout the session to support their emotional well-being.
- Effective partnerships with parents, local schools and pre-schools have been established to ensure children's individual needs are well supported.
- Safeguarding arrangements are very well-established to ensure that every child is protected and that they are safe when engaged in activities both on and off the premises.

It is not yet outstanding because

- There is scope to enhance the good progress made in children's health and self-care skills through providing appropriate cutlery at lunchtimes and explaining to them the routines at mealtimes.

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 observed activities in the main playroom and the garden.
- The inspector held a meeting with the manager of the setting.
The inspector looked at children's assessment records, planning documentation,
- evidence of suitability of staff working within the setting and a range of other documentation.
- The inspector also took account of the views of the parents and carers spoken to on the day.

Inspector

Jasvinder Kaur

Full report

Information about the setting

St Albans Pre School was registered in 1991 and re-registered as a Limited Company in 2009 on the Early Years Register and the compulsory part of the Childcare Register. The setting operates from a large community room and two smaller rooms on the first floor of St Albans Community Centre in Smethwick. All children share access to an enclosed outdoor play area. The setting serves children in the local community and surrounding areas. Currently, there are 60 children on roll, all of whom are within the early years age range. The setting provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. It is open each weekday during school term times, from 9am to 3.30pm. Sessions times are 9am to 12noon and 12.30pm to 3.30pm. The setting currently supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language. There are five members of staff who work with children, all of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3. The manager is qualified to a degree level. The setting 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:

- enhance children's strong physical skills further by providing appropriate cutlery at lunchtimes and by ensuring that all children understand the routine at lunchtime, particularly washing hands.

Inspection judgements

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

Children make good progress in all aspects of their learning and development. They are very well supported in this by very skilled and enthusiastic staff, who use effective teaching techniques and thoroughly enjoy the part they play in supporting every child. Regular observations and assessment of what children do and like are used effectively to plan next steps towards making strong strides in their early learning. All adults are deployed very well to support children's learning and their care needs. An effective key person system results in staff knowing children well and planning activities to close any gaps in their learning. For example, they arrange one-to-one interaction or small group activities for younger children, who are still emerging in their skills to sit and concentrate in a large group at story times. This also helps staff to provide good support in preparing all children for the move into the care of other providers, such as school. Staff efficiently encourage parents to contribute to initial assessments of their children's learning through discussing starting points. There is a two-way exchange of information with parents on a daily basis with regard to children's development and individual needs.

Staff interact well with children, engaging them in conversation and promoting their language abilities. Consequently, children enjoy adults' company and talk clearly about their imagined and personal experiences throughout the session. Their communication skills are fostered through daily singing and story sessions. Staff use their voices very skilfully as they read stories with repeated phrases and children join in enthusiastically. They competently promote children's home languages by taking English words in a story and giving the home alternatives. Staff provide good opportunities, both indoors and outdoors, for all children to make marks, to write for different purposes, including writing their own names and to use their phonic knowledge for linking sounds and letters. In a cosy and relaxed book area, older children readily select a storybook and read with peers. Staff support children's understanding of number and shape through daily routines and during play, such as matching and sorting shapes and colours, singing relevant rhymes and counting toys and objects. Children learn about differences in size and pattern during a variety of activities and spontaneous play. For example, while children draw on a large blackboard in the garden, staff encourage them to look carefully to recognise which is a 'big' or a 'very big' circle.

A range of sensory and texture experiences, including hand printing, lentils, soapflakes, natural materials and water and sand play, encourages children's talents. Staff provide a variety of art and craft materials, including recycled materials for children to produce artwork, such as a rabbit or a rainbow. A wide range of musical instruments and an excellent sensory room provide children with opportunities to use their skills to explore concepts and ideas. Children develop their understanding of how technology can help them in their everyday lives as they use computers, keyboards, cameras and a selection of electronic toys. There is a variety of themed activities to enhance children's knowledge of the environment, including bug-hunting. Children grow herbs, vegetables and flowers and harvest their produce. This gives children practical experience of learning where some foods come from and how they grow. Staff encourage children to learn about similarities and differences in the community they live in, for example, wearing a hijab or covering the head when visiting a Sikh temple. Marking festivals of different religions and cultures all through the year and a selection of resources depicting positive images of diversity help children to understand and respect the values of others.

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

Staff promote children's personal, social and emotional development very well. Consequently, children are happy and confident, with a positive attitude to learning. A successful key person system, the settling-in policy and staffs' encouraging interaction help children, including new-comers, to quickly establish a secure bonds with adults. They also feel secure in their relationships with their peers. Strong partnerships with parents help staff to know children very well and to meet their individual needs effectively. Staff provide good support to prepare children for the move on to older groups, both within the setting and in other settings. They have established close links with the local schools, which provides a smooth transition. Staff read relevant stories, provide reassurance to children and also invite school teachers at their own setting to meet children.

Daily access to the indoor soft play area and to an outstanding outdoor play area enhances children's development, as staff arrange a balanced and broad range of opportunities in the seven areas of learning. Children show increasing dexterity in coordination and control in large and small movements and in using a range of equipment. Staff provide ample opportunities for children to develop their talents in handling objects and in using tools for making marks, as well as construction sets. Children mostly advance in self-care skills, for instance putting on their own jackets before going out in the garden and attending to toileting needs. However, there is scope to enhance further children's strong physical skills in respect of health and self-care by providing appropriate cutlery at lunchtimes so that all children can enjoy their food independently. Staff do not always clearly explain the routines before lunchtimes, resulting in not all children understanding the importance of washing hands before they eat.

Children independently access well-organised resources and equipment in a clean, bright and colourful environment, where they are confident and develop warm and friendly relationships with staff and peers. Throughout the session, staff provide good levels of support to manage their feelings and behaviour. Children show pride in selecting their favourite songs and singing to the whole group. They are encouraged effectively to consider others and to take turns and share and their efforts are acknowledged appropriately by all staff. At the end of story sessions, staff tell children what they have done well and reward them with stickers. Effective partnerships between staff and parents ensure continuity and consistency of boundaries for children, who respond well to these. As a result, in all areas of learning children enjoy harmonious environments, which help to support their sense of well-being. Children of all ages enjoy taking responsibility for small tasks, such as tidying up toys or disposing of leftovers in the bin at lunchtimes. Children learn how to keep themselves safe through staff guidance and relevant activities, which includes the theme of 'people who help us' and visits from a police officer.

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

The manager has a good understanding of the safeguarding, welfare and learning requirements of the Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage. Safeguarding procedures are robust, ensuring that children are kept safe and protected from harm and neglect. All staff receive ongoing training and have a strong knowledge and understanding of child protection issues. They understand and respond appropriately to signs of possible abuse and neglect. This includes responding to and taking relevant action for any inappropriate behaviour displayed by other members of staff, or any other person working with children. Recruitment and vetting procedures are rigorously implemented, ensuring that all adults working in the setting are closely monitored and assessed for suitability. Children are further safeguarded through high levels of supervision. To eliminate hazards, a detailed risk assessment and daily safety checks are carried out in all areas. Robust steps are taken to ensure intruders are prevented from entering the premises, as all doors are provided with security code numbers. There are good arrangements in place for monitoring visitors to the premises.

The setting's evaluation takes into account the views of children, parents and staff, as well as ongoing support from the local authority. Staff observe each other's practice, in order to highlight relevant issues at regular staff meetings. They receive constructive support from the management and attend a wide range of relevant training courses for professional development. Consequently, planning of activities and assessment of children are consistent and precise and display an accurate understanding of all children's abilities and progress. A well-established programme of regular appraisals ensures staff are monitored and underperformance is tackled effectively. The recommendations raised during the previous visit have been met successfully to improve the quality of care and education of children. Policies and procedures are under continual review and the required documentation is effectively maintained.

The setting's strong association with the school and the local authority allows staff to seek advice to ensure children get the support they need. Partnerships with external agencies, including medical professionals, ensure that each child benefits from a positive experience while at the setting. Partnerships with parents are very positive and make a rich contribution to children's learning and care. The active involvement of parents is encouraged through a comprehensive welcome pack, questionnaires and newsletters. There are 'story sacks' with a variety of resources for taking home, so that parents can be actively involved and can extend children's learning through play. Parents speak highly of the service and regard the playgroup's environment as 'very welcoming' and staff as 'very friendly and supportive'. They appreciate how well staff helped their children to settle-in when they first joined the playgroup and provided reassurance to parents. An open-door policy encourages parents to convey their views and preferences as and when they wish. They are kept well-informed about their children's achievements and development through regular verbal feedback and parents' evenings.

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
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	EY398937
Local authority	Sandwell
Inspection number	874070
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 8
Total number of places	30
Number of children on roll	60
Name of provider	St Albans Community Association
Date of previous inspection	05/07/2010
Telephone number	0121 5580018

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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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