

Children 1st

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

Inspection date	25/02/2014
Previous inspection date	23/10/2013

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	
	Previous inspection:	
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

- Highly skilled, knowledgeable and enthusiastic staff use very effective teaching methods to help children make good progress in their learning and development.
- Children really enjoy being at pre-school. They thrive in the most stimulating surroundings and form strong bonds with the adults working with them, who are led by a strong management team.
- Safeguarding is given high priority within the pre-school, with appropriate procedures in place to ensure that staff have a thorough understanding of their responsibilities.
- Staff and children make very good use of the outside areas to help children have fun, to be exuberant and to learn on a larger more active scale.
- Children benefit from strong partnerships with parents. Staff are committed to working together with them, to promote the best interests of their children.

It is not yet outstanding because

- On occasions, a few children are less well engaged during lunch and snack time routines because these are not so well suited to their individual needs.
- There is room to enhance the opportunities for children to hear rhymes and stories in the home languages of their families, in order to fully recognise and value all languages spoken by children and their families.

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, including taking a walk with the children around the school field.
- 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 talked with the staff and children and 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 Pre-school opened in 2004 and is on the Early Years Register. The pre-school is privately owned and operates within the premises of St. Peter's Primary School in the town of 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 early years degrees. The pre-school opens Monday to Friday term time only. Sessions are from 1pm until 4pm with an optional lunch club from 12 noon. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 55 children attending who are in the early years age group. 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.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- enhance monitoring of children's engagement during lunch and snack times and adapt routines accordingly to support their behaviour and learning
- enhance opportunities for children to recognise, value and make more use of their home languages during their play to improve their learning even further.

Inspection judgements

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

Staff use their knowledge well to plan interesting and stimulating activities and, as a result, children are excited and enthusiastic about being at pre-school. Children enjoy a wide variety of activities that encourage their natural curiosity to learn and explore. They freely access the tools and toys to expand their play in the sand and water. Staff frequently rotate these resources to inspire children to further their experiments and discoveries. Staff are positive role models, their excellent teaching methods encouraging children to be eager, focused and imaginative learners. For example, staff provide a large quantity of dry rice and children explore the properties using large and small spoons and measuring tubes. Staff are on hand to give information on volumes, to encourage children to compare the sizes of containers and to expand children's vocabulary by introducing and repeating words, such as overflowing. As a result, children's communication, language and thinking skills are promoted very well. Staff support children to gain new skills by encouraging them to think about and access different materials to help fix the pieces to their models. Children show a great deal of satisfaction when they achieve their goals. Staff are sensitive and observe children's play closely. They fit in with children's ideas

helping as needed but without taking over or directing. Staff watch as the younger children learn from the older children. For example, older children work together to build a large boat with the interlocking bricks and they allow the younger children to successfully join in. This helps children of all ages grow in confidence and be ready for the next stage of learning and for school. Staff engage children to develop a joy in reading as there is a wide range of fiction and non-fiction books. Children are encouraged to extend their interest in dinosaurs through reading.

Staff effectively support children that are learning English as an additional language. There are pictorial reminders of the routine and staff use clear speech with some gestures to help children's understanding. Staff gently present other languages that children use at home. They introduce some French songs and rhymes making good use of the interactive whiteboard. However, there are fewer chances for children to hear stories and rhymes in the other languages spoken at home, to fully recognise and value the home languages of all the families. All staff have a very good understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage and use this knowledge to accurately assess and plan for children's learning. Staff make good use of the outside area to cover all the areas of learning to help children learn on a larger more active scale. Staff gather information from parents and staff quickly identify children's starting points as soon as the child starts at pre-school. They observe, and record children's development using a new system of information technology, which also helps to identify next steps for individual children and to inform the planning system. This means that staff are able to show how children are making rapid progress in their learning and development in relation to their starting points.

Staff build respectful and caring relationships with all the children and their families while focusing on their learning and achievements. Children's development is frequently shared with parents, together with ideas for supporting them at home. This means parents are kept involved in their children's progress. Parents state they have seen their children make good progress during their time at the pre-school.

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

The highly effective key person system means that children quickly form close trusting relationships with the adults who care for them. As a result, children separate from their parents and make the transition from home to pre-school with ease. The support children receive to prepare them for transition into school is very good. The pre-school is held in the nursery premises and the staff also work in the school. Children enjoy walks around the school grounds to observe the plants and play in the infant school playground. Many of the routines, such as outdoor play reflect the routines they will experience in school. As a result, children pass seamlessly into school when the time comes.

Most of the time staff, are very well deployed to support children's care and learning. They sit with the children and are eagerly involved in their play. Staff appropriately intervene in the role play hospital to help children write for a purpose when completing 'prescription' forms and to help children master new skills, such as applying a plaster sticky side down. Staff are helping children to develop their independence as children are supported to

spread their own crackers and to open their packages in their packed lunch. Children learn to behave very well. They listen closely to instructions and eagerly tidy up before going home. Staff encourage children to be polite and they are learning to respect others. However, during lunch and snack times, the atmosphere is more hectic and staff sit with the children a little less. They spend a little more time monitoring the routine by standing over the children and, on some occasions, the otherwise excellent behaviour management practice is less effective. Staff need to call over to children on other tables and this does not fully help children to sit calmly and learn to adapt their behaviour to different social situations and changes in routine.

Children have excellent opportunities to learn about a healthy lifestyle. They have access to an exciting outdoor space where they can exercise energetically. Children enjoy playing on the challenging climbing frame and staff sensitively support them to learn new skills and to take manageable risks. Children are shown how to hold onto the rope and lean back to climb a low slope and they are supported to succeed. Children are encouraged to develop their self-care skills. They independently hang up their coats and bags, and staff give useful tips to help children manage dressing themselves. For example, when children are trying to put on their trousers by themselves they tell children to 'pull until you see your socks'. Staff offer healthy snacks and children take home a piece of fruit, which helps them discuss healthy eating with their parents. Children are encouraged to try new tastes and their allergies are respected with alternatives offered. Children are learning about keeping themselves safe as they are discussing their favourite places in the locality. The children are reminded to walk indoors and the consequences of their actions. Staff have recently revised the procedures for the care of children that are unwell. They have made the procedure for the administering of medication more precise and parents are asked for details of any medication given to children before they arrive at pre-school. Children that have displayed symptoms, such as a high temperature are sent home. This protects children's health while at the setting.

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

Leadership and management are very good because there is a strong commitment to providing a high quality provision for all children. The managers and staff have a shared vision for the pre-school and work well together. They have a very clear understanding of their responsibilities in meeting the requirements of the Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage. Staff have detailed information on child protection issues, including training. This ensures that they understand their responsibilities towards the children in the pre-school and are confident to take appropriate steps if they have concerns about a child. Staff have a clear understanding of risks. There is a secure collection procedure and parents are contacted before a child is released to someone that staff do not recognise. The environment is regularly assessed so that potential hazards can be made safe or removed. After accidents, that require hospital attention, staff take swift and stringent action to reassess the environment and make changes to ensure similar accidents to not happen in the future. A high proportion of staff have up-to-date paediatric first aid qualifications to fully support children after an accident or if children become unwell during the session. Staff have effective policies to ensure parents details

are up-to-date so they can be quickly contacted in an emergency. Robust systems are in place to employ suitable people for their roles. The current staff team are very well established and managers monitor staff performance effectively through regular supervision meetings and appraisals. This securely supports children's health, safety and well-being.

The strong management team strives to motivate staff and sets out a clear vision of their expectations. Actions and recommendations from previous inspections have been quickly and effectively addressed. The staff display photographs of themselves and the children in their key group and this helps parents to be very well informed. There is an effective system for monitoring the children's learning and development. Children's learning records are reviewed weekly and this supports staff to quickly identify areas to focus on and to be addressed in future planning to ensure children are continuing to make the best progress they can. The manager and staff regularly discuss improvements and have plans for further investments to aid the smooth running of the pre-school. Staff are highly qualified and have attended several in-house and short courses to update their knowledge and expertise. Staff report that recent training has given ideas to positively manage children's behaviour and how effective this training has been in promoting good behaviour. This helps staff remain motivated and continuously develops their skills.

The pre-school has promoted excellent partnership working with the host school. Staff share the recording system using the same information technology as the nursery and reception class. This enables a very close working partnership with the school to monitor and support children's progress. Staff encourage a two-way flow of information with the other providers where children attend and they effectively share information to promote children's well-being. Staff have a very secure understanding of the need to work closely with other professionals should the need arise. Parents report they are very happy with the pre-school. The staff are very supportive and help children's learning at home.

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	EY279966
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	953234
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 5
Total number of places	36
Number of children on roll	55
Name of provider	Children 1st Partnership
Date of previous inspection	23/10/2013
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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