

Spring Meadows

The Barclay School, Walkern Road, STEVENAGE, Hertfordshire, SG1 3RB

Inspection date	08/04/2014
Previous inspection date	29/08/2013

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		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 requires improvement

- Children's personal, social and emotional development is supported effectively by suitable teaching during group activities and staff consistently role modelling appropriate behaviour.
- Most aspects of partnership working with parents are successful and help children to feel confident and secure at the setting.
- The progress made on most aspects identified as requiring action at the last inspection has improved children's safety and well-being.

It is not yet good because

- There are insufficient staff at some sessions to consistently meet the learning needs of the early years children, indoors and outside.
- Staff do not consistently gather sufficient information from parents and others providers of the Early Years Foundation Stage to complement learning or build on what children know and can do.
- Support for children who speak English as an additional language is not readily available to help children make the most of what is on offer.
- The monitoring of the setting is not sufficiently embedded to ensure that some weaker areas of practice are identified and addressed. Therefore, staff do not have a shared view or focused action plan to help them secure rapid improvements for children.

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 voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. This report includes a judgment about compliance with the requirements of that register.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed activities, inside and outdoors, and talked about children's learning with the staff.
- The inspector viewed the areas of the premises and outdoor area used for care.
The inspector looked at children's assessment records, planning documentation, evidence of suitability of staff and a range of other documentation, including the safeguarding procedures.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents spoken to on the day of inspection.

Inspector

Alison Reeves

Full report

Information about the setting

Spring Meadows was registered in 2009 on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. It is situated in Barclay School in Stevenage, Hertfordshire and is privately owned and managed. The nursery serves the local area and is accessible to all children. It operates from a separate building within the school grounds and there is a fully enclosed area available for outdoor play.

The nursery employs eight members of childcare staff. Of these, six hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 2 or above. The nursery opens Monday to Friday during school holidays, from 7.50am until 6.15pm. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 29 children on roll, three of whom are in the early years age group. It supports a number of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and 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:

- improve the provision for children by gathering and sharing relevant information with parents and other providers of the Early Years Foundation Stage to complement children's experiences in settings where they spend most time
- provide sufficient staff throughout all sessions to consistently meet the needs of the early years children by supporting their learning and development, both indoors and outside
- utilise the readily available support for children who speak English as an additional language, so they can benefit from what is on offer as soon as they begin at the setting.

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

- extend reflection on practice and target setting to clearly identify weaknesses in practice and secure rapid and sustained improvements in the provision for children.

Inspection judgements

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

Children enjoy a suitable selection of activities that generally support their learning and development. They have free choice of activities and generally move between the activities that interest them most. There is an appropriate focus on children's interests. Staff routinely consult and involve children in planning activities for future sessions. As a result, most children engage well and show enthusiasm for what is on offer. The craft activities are particularly popular and staff provide different resources that enable children to make special creations for their friends and families. Staff talk to children and conversations are relaxed and cover a wide range of topics. This supports children's communication and language skills. Younger children enjoy being with the older children. They like to work together and gain support from them when playing word games, such as hangman. This supports children in developing their letter recognition and writing skills.

Some children are not sufficiently challenged because the staff lack detailed knowledge of children's current abilities. This is compounded by the lack of time staff have to engage with children. They are frequently interrupted, in order to meet the needs of others. This does not allow staff to sustain high quality interaction to support consistently children's learning. Staff use appropriate teaching to support learning. They ask open questions to help children think through their ideas and come to their own conclusions. After making some stick puppets, a child wants to make a theatre to perform a show. There is an attempt to build a box using paper but this is not robust. The child is supported in carrying through the idea. When this is not possible, staff offer to bring in a large box for the child to use the following day. Staff do put children's interests and needs first. When time allows and there are only a few children, teaching and support for learning is good.

Parents supply some information about their children's interests but on occasions, this is minimal and staff are not consistently able to complement children's learning in other settings where they spend more time. Staff understand how to support children who speak English as an additional language but do not have the resources available at short notice, so the provision for these children is not optimal. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are making steady progress in their learning and development. Where children attend the setting regularly, parents are well informed about their activities and progress. These parents are equally good at sharing information with staff. Consequently, some children are making good progress towards the early learning goals, which supports their learning in school.

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

Staff provide a friendly atmosphere where children and parents feel welcome. Staff are caring and establish warm relationships with the children and their families. Children are happy and secure in the setting. They are delighted to explain what they like to do. They laugh and smile as they play with their friends and siblings. This shows their confidence and contentment. Children behave well and understand what is expected of them. Staff are good role models and promote children's social skills effectively. As a result, children get along with each other. They share and take turns, offer support and encouragement. By consistently focusing on kindness and caring, the staff help children to understand about the needs of others. Children develop respect and a shared responsibility for the well-being of others. This supports them in continuing to behave sensibly and responsibly,

as is expected of them in a school situation.

The key person system has developed, so that each child's care and learning is monitored. However, the minimal staff ratio means that the key person does not consistently spend enough time with each child to make this fully effective. Staff encourage children to be independent, to manage self-care, such as washing their hands before they eat and putting on their own coats and shoes before playing outside. Mealtimes are very social occasions and staff use this time to reinforce children's understanding of good manner, politeness and of living a healthy lifestyle. Children spread their own toppings on bread and pour their own drinks. This helps them to take responsibility for small tasks and promotes their coordination.

Children spend plenty of time outdoors in the fresh air. The enclosed space has high fences, which means balls stay inside the area and games are not regularly interrupted by the loss of the ball. There is space for energetic play and this supports children in developing their physical skills. Children go on outings and frequently walk to the shops and cinema. This enables staff to help children to learn about keeping themselves safe by walking sensibly with the group and learning how to cross roads safely and with care. The indoor environment is suitably safe and adequately resourced. Children can choose from the labelled boxes, resources are well maintained and of a good quality. This means that children can access them with ease, supporting them to become independent. Staff have attempted to adapt the environment from a secondary classroom to create areas for different types of play. This goes some way to help children to locate the things they want and to provide appropriate spaces for quiet uninterrupted play.

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

Children's welfare is promoted appropriately within the setting. The manager's understanding about the need to fulfil all of the requirements of the Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage is generally sound. Required staff ratios are met at all times. However, the organisation of the space means staff are not always deployed effectively to enable them to consistently meet children's learning needs, so their learning is not always maximised. This failure is a breach of requirements of the Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage. Children are safeguarded because staff follow the policies. For example, they carefully check the identity of any visitors and ensure they are aware of the procedures regarding mobile telephones and camera in the setting. This helps to keep the children safe. Staff attend training on safeguarding and are clear about the procedures to follow. They have the relevant documents to help them to make a child protection referral, should there be concerns about a child's well-being. All staff undergo appropriate checks to ensure their suitability to work with children. The manager explains the induction procedures in place to ensure new staff are clear about their role and responsibilities. Risk assessments of the premises and resources are implemented. This means that children are safe and protected while attending the setting.

The staff team are suitable qualified and this ensures they have the appropriate skills required for teaching children through play. However, the minimal number of staff on duty

means that they are required to provide supervision indoor and outside, to help children with specific requests and deal with parents and other visitors. This has a negative impact on the amount of time available for teaching the early years children. The programme of training ensures staff have the essential skills needed to protect children and promote their well-being. The regular staff supervision sessions are beginning to have an impact on practice. This has not progressed sufficiently to closely monitor children's progress or to the clear identification of strengths and weaknesses of the setting as a whole. This means that there is no defined, shared action plan to target weaknesses and bring about rapid and secure improvements for all children.

Parents have access to policy information through the setting's website and on request at the site. Staff are gathering parents' views through the annual questionnaire, although, these are not collated and widely shared. Parents, who express their views at the inspection, praise the staff. They say their children are happy and enjoy coming. Parents feel it is a safe environment where their children are well looked after and are having fun. Staff work with the Spring Meadows after school club setting if children also attend there. Where children attend, at short notice, from other schools there is not currently any arrangement in place to share information, so staff are unable to complement children's learning in settings where they spend more time.

The Childcare Register

The requirements for the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are **Met**

The requirements for the voluntary 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	EY387719
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	963335
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 17
Total number of places	32
Number of children on roll	29
Name of provider	Louise Anne Prior
Date of previous inspection	29/08/2013
Telephone number	0192 046 9137

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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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