

# Elmhurst House Pre School

Elmhurst House, 11 Margaret Street, STONE, Staffordshire, ST15 8EL

## Inspection date

Previous inspection date

10/04/2014

Not Applicable

## The quality and standards of the early years provision

### This inspection:

2

Previous inspection:

Not Applicable

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

- Teaching is often outstanding because staff fully understand how to promote children's learning and have high expectations for their achievements. As a result, children progress well given their starting points and capabilities.
- Children's health, safety and well-being is very well promoted at all times, through the comprehensive policies and procedures in place, which are implemented by staff and thoroughly monitored by management.
- Management and staff work well as a team, to continuously improve the quality of the provision. Everyone is involved in the evaluation of practice and implementation of identified improvements. As a result, staff are enthusiastic and motivated, benefitting the children's experiences in the pre-school and ultimately, their progress.
- Partnerships with parents are outstanding. Parents receive clear information about their child's day and the activities they have enjoyed, both verbally and through daily diaries. This ensures they are fully aware of the care and early education their children receive.

### It is not yet outstanding because

- There is scope to further extend children's thinking skills through the development of open-ended resources outdoors.
- Mealtimes are not always fully maximised as a learning and development opportunity for the 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.

## Inspection activities

- The inspector observed activities in the main playrooms and the outside learning environment.
- The inspector conducted a joint observation of an adult-led activity with the manager.
- The inspector held meetings with the manager of the provision and spoke with staff and children at appropriate times during the inspection.
- The inspector looked at children's assessment records and planning documentation.
- The inspector checked evidence of suitability and qualifications of staff working with children, the provider's self-evaluation form and improvement plan.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents spoken to on the day of inspection and from information included in the pre-school's own parent survey.

## Inspector

Sharon Lea

## Full report

### Information about the setting

Elmhurst House Pre School was registered in 2013 on the Early Years Register. It is situated in sole use premises in Stone in Staffordshire and is managed by a private company. The pre-school serves the local and surrounding areas and is accessible to all children aged two to five years. It operates from four rooms downstairs and two rooms upstairs. There is an enclosed area available for outdoor play. Access to the building is via steps, with alternative ground floor access available. The pre-school employs six members of child care staff. Of these, three hold appropriate early years qualifications at levels 2, 3 and 6 and two hold Qualified Teacher Status. The pre-school opens Monday to Friday, for 48 weeks of the year. Sessions are from 7.30am until 6pm. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 39 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 children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

### What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- introduce opportunities for children to use open-ended resources, such as planks and crates in the outdoor area, to support their developing thinking skills
- consider how mealtimes are organised, to maximise staffing in order to further support children's learning and development opportunities.

### Inspection judgements

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

Staff demonstrate a good knowledge and understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage and the seven areas of learning. Individual learning journals include observations of each child's learning. The information is evaluated and used to identify the next steps in their learning, contributing to the planning of a wide variety of play experiences and opportunities, based on children's needs. Planning is based around a topic, which is used to extend the children's knowledge and understanding. Parents are actively encouraged to contribute activity ideas to incorporate within the planning. For example, for the topic on traditional tales, parents contribute ideas, such as 'plant beans and grow a beanstalk' and 'build a house like the three little pigs'. This supports staff in planning a wide variety of activities and demonstrates the high value that they place on parental involvement in all aspects of the pre-school. An overview of the planning is shared with parents, enabling them to be aware of what their children are learning about and why.

The quality of teaching which children receive in the pre-school is of a very high standard

and some is outstanding. This is because the staff are highly qualified and understand how to extend children's learning. For example, during a baking activity, children gain an understanding of how things change from a solid to a liquid, such as chocolate when melted. Staff ask open-ended questions to promote children's thinking skills and enable them to share prior learning, such as the cooker making things hot and the freezer making things cold. Because staff are highly skilled, they are also able to appropriately differentiate the activity to meet the needs of all of the children participating. For example, when counting out the paper cake cases or eggs to decorate their cakes, staff are aware of the children who will know how many to take for two and those who need support to count these out, one at a time. This ensures that all activities are accessible to all children and support their achievement at a level appropriate to their needs. Consequently, children of all ages make good progress in their learning and development.

Children's communication and language development is very well supported by staff throughout the day. Children enjoy sharing favourite stories with staff and engage happily with songs and action rhymes, copying the actions led by staff. Language is modelled very well by staff who speak clearly and engage the children in conversation at all times, to support their language development. Group activities, such as, pulling and pushing a piece of stretchy fabric together develops children's skills in working together as a group and their ability to listen to and follow instructions. Older children participate in regular group activities where they learn to identify letters and the sounds they make, teaching them skills which are built upon each day.

Staff provide a print rich environment where resources and displays are labelled with words. Older children are encouraged to write their names on their creative work and have opportunities to practise these skills when they are developmentally ready. Resources for writing and mark-making are evident both indoors and outdoors to enable all children to develop their early writing skills. For example, outdoors children use large chalks to draw and make marks on a large-scale. This supports children to develop the large physical skills which will ultimately support the finer physical skills needed for writing, in readiness for the next stage in their learning, such as school.

Staff and parents work in partnership extremely well and parents speak highly of the excellent relationships that they have with the staff. These relationships are considered a strength by the pre-school staff, who fully understand the importance of working together to promote consistency of care for each child. Regular progress updates are shared with parents and next steps in learning and development are agreed, providing the children with targeted support both in the pre-school and at home. Excellent systems for daily communication ensure that parents are kept informed about their child's achievements and activities that they have enjoyed during their day at the pre-school. Staff work closely with parents to complete their child's progress check at age two, which parents then share with other health professionals as they wish. Parents are encouraged to contribute information about their child's learning at home through sharing observations, which staff incorporate in the child's learning journals. This ensures that children's needs are continually assessed and planned for and that children who require additional support receive this at the earliest opportunity. Learning links between home and the pre-school are promoted through a weekly library book system, activities, such as cut-out dominoes to promote mathematical understanding and a home reading scheme for children who are

ready to move on to this stage in their learning. The pre-school also sends home a 'birthday bag' which contains a teddy bear to participate in the child's birthday celebrations which can then be shared with everyone in the pre-school on its return. Parents are also invited to attend events in the pre-school, such as, open days and mother's or father's day breakfasts. Parents share that they are highly satisfied with their involvement within the pre-school and the progress which their children have made in their social skills and learning, such as, literacy and numeracy.

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

Children benefit from gradual settling-in sessions, where time is spent getting to know them, their families and their individual needs. Parents provide information about their child's likes and dislikes and current interests through 'All about me' documents. These are shared with a key staff member through the established key person system in place, enabling close relationships to be formed between staff, parents and their children. Parents comment how happy their children are to attend the pre-school which is bright, warm and welcoming; they describe staff as their extended family. As a result, the move from home to pre-school is relaxed and supportive of the children's needs from the outset. This promotes children's sense of security and enables them to become confident in exploring their new environment. Time is spent sharing information between parents and staff, at the start and end of each day to ensure any changing needs are known and addressed. The use of daily diaries aids this further. Similarly, moves on to school are equally well supported, in partnership with parents and the new teacher. This is because close links are formed between the pre-school and local schools. For example, during a recent World book day, children from the local school came into the pre-school to read their favourite stories to the children. In addition, the pre-school children benefit from weekly visits to the sensory room and other interesting events in the school.

Staff enable children to develop their independence and self-help skills well. This is because staff know the children well and recognise when they are ready to take responsibility, such as, managing their own toileting and hygiene needs or putting on their own coats for outdoor play. Staff also acknowledge when older children are ready to help with little tasks, such as, sharing out cutlery at meal times, supporting their development of self-esteem and sense of responsibility. An understanding of the importance of hygiene is fostered with all children, through hand washing being incorporated into the daily routine after using the bathroom, going outside or before snacks and meals. Children's understanding of why it is important to wash their hands is evident during baking activities where they tell staff that their hands need to be clean as they do not want dirt in their cakes.

Staff create a very inspiring and enabling learning environment, where the children are able to use a range of rooms with different activities and resources, as they choose. High-quality toys and equipment are in good order and easy to find, enabling children to self-select the resources they need to extend their play and learning. All areas of the premises are clean, safe and secure with staff attentive in promoting a safe environment. Displays celebrate children's creativity and the photographs in their learning journals show them engaged in activities, celebrating the skills they have used and the learning gained from

these experiences. Positive behaviour is highly evident and children happily play together in this calm and caring environment. This is because the staff understand the importance of ensuring that children are stimulated and actively engaged in play, to prevent them from becoming bored, and support the children in working together. Reward systems are in place, such as, 'star of the week' and 'lunchtime award' to acknowledge significant positive aspects of children's behaviour. Children's confidence and self-esteem is continually nurtured through the praise and encouragement they receive from staff. Children are polite and kind to each other and manners are encouraged at all times. Staff provide very good role models in being kind and respectful to one another and actively encourage children to be sensitive towards others. This results in children being polite and respectful, and confident to communicate their ideas with others. These personal skills in managing their emotions and developing positive relationships support children well towards the next stage of their learning, such as school.

Children have opportunities for outdoor play and fresh air several times each day, developing physical skills and confidence as they enthusiastically play in the well-equipped outdoor area in all weathers. Outdoors, children freely explore sand and water and learn about how to mix substances together to create interesting consistencies in the mud kitchen. Riding around the car track, they develop skills, such as negotiating obstacles and other children. Through the use of equipment, such as balance bikes, they learn to develop skills which will support them when they progress to riding a two-wheeled bicycle. However, there is scope to develop the resources available outdoors further through the provision of open-ended resources, such as, planks, crates and blocks which will enable children to develop their own structures and extend their developing thinking skills. Awareness of how to keep themselves safe is also promoted during outdoor activities, through reminders about not going too fast and using the steps appropriately when moving from the building to the outdoor area. Safety awareness is also enhanced through activities during road safety week where children learn about how to cross roads safely and through visitors, such as fire-fighters to the pre-school. Through these opportunities, children are made aware of safety risks and have opportunities to take risks safely, under adult supervision, supporting them in understanding how to keep themselves safe. Snacks and meals are freshly prepared and cooked on the premises and are nutritionally balanced to ensure that children benefit from a healthy diet. Staff support children well in understanding the importance of a healthy diet through discussions about healthy food choices. Snacks are provided mid- morning and mid- afternoon which means that children are well nourished, maintaining their energy levels throughout the day. Staff monitor children's food and drink intake and share with parents verbally and through daily diaries what their child has eaten. Mealtimes are also used as opportunities to develop social skills and to practise using cutlery appropriately. However, there is scope to develop mealtimes as a learning and development opportunity further still, through reviewing the way that staff are deployed during the serving of meals, to maximise the time available with the children.

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

The management team have a very good understanding of their roles and responsibilities in ensuring that the pre-school is effectively organised and the requirements of the Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage are effectively implemented. Comprehensive policies and procedures, risk assessments and safety measures are all in place to ensure that risks and hazards are minimised. Visual checks of the indoor and outdoor environments are carried out by staff daily, to ensure that all areas used by the children are safe. Access to the building is secure and all parents, children and visitors are admitted personally by staff who vet identification of visitors before admission. This ensures that staff are fully aware of who is on the premises, safeguarding the children at all times. Parents report that they are reassured by the security measures in place and feel confident that their children are safe. Staff have received safeguarding training and are knowledgeable about safeguarding procedures and their role and duty to report any concerns. Parents are made aware of all policies and procedures when first joining the pre-school and when these are updated or new policies are implemented. Staff are well deployed throughout the pre-school to ensure children are well supervised and staffing ratios are adhered to at all times. All of which, ensure that appropriate steps are taken to minimise risk and to keep children safe and secure.

A thorough recruitment and induction process ensures that new staff are suitable and fully understand their role and responsibilities. All staff contribute to the supervision and appraisal processes which are used well to develop their personal practices and to identify their training and development needs. The manager effectively monitors the quality of all aspects of practice. This includes spending time within the pre-school observing practice, reviewing staff's observations and assessments of children and being actively involved in the planning of learning opportunities. This ensures children's individual learning needs are being correctly identified and met effectively. As a result, children progress well across all areas of learning. Staff's knowledge of good practice is enhanced through their ongoing professional development. Training is accessed through the local authority and shared through staff meetings with the whole of the staff team once completed. This ensures all staff are up-to-date with current best practice and any changes to legislation. It is evident that staff training has had a very positive impact upon the pre-school, as staff demonstrate how they have put ideas they have gained, into practice. For example, recent training on equality and diversity has resulted in all staff getting involved in reviewing policy and practices in this area. Other training where good practice ideas are shared has prompted the introduction of a Mother's day breakfast for parents, which through its success will be repeated for other occasions. In addition, the high levels of experience and teaching expertise of the staff is evident through their knowledge of planning which is differentiated to meet the needs of each child attending the pre-school and their skilful teaching.

Evaluation of the pre-school's strengths and areas for development is ongoing and actively involves contributions from the whole staff team and parents through the use of questionnaires and verbal discussion. An ongoing improvement plan is in place, which all staff contribute to in their aspiration to continuously improve the quality of the provision. This reflects the enthusiasm and commitment of the staff team, to provide the best possible provision for the children they care for. Partnerships with parents are outstanding, enabling staff and parents to work very well together to support the care and learning needs of the children throughout their time in the pre-school.

Parents are extremely happy with the level of care that their children receive and the evident progress that they are making in their learning and development. They feel totally involved in the pre-school and feel strongly that staff are very friendly, caring and approachable and take time each day to share written and verbal feedback with them about their child's day. This ensures that a two-way flow of information is encouraged between parents and staff on a daily basis, keeping everyone informed and up to date about the children's needs. Parents receive newsletters, have a range of information available through notice boards and a dedicated website. They are welcome to share their child's learning journal at any time and are updated regularly on their children's progress. Parents are also invited to join the parents and friends association to participate in decision making about how funding is spent on resources. They also recommend the pre-school to others and are looking to place future children as they feel that the care is to such an excellent standard. Effective partnerships with external agencies and local schools are also well established and contribute securely to meeting children's needs. Staff work well with the area special educational needs coordinator and speech and language therapists, to support children who have additional learning or communication needs.

Teachers are invited to meet those nursery children who will shortly be transferring to school, enabling information to be shared about individual children's personalities and needs. In addition, staff and children attend special events, such as when owls visit the local school and invite school children and their teachers to share in the building of a hedgehog house in the pre-school garden. These opportunities support the transition for children who will be moving on to the local school extremely well and help to establish the pre-school as part of the local community.



## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	EY470198
<b>Local authority</b>	Staffordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	938066
<b>Type of provision</b>	Full-time provision
<b>Registration category</b>	Childcare - Non-Domestic
<b>Age range of children</b>	0 - 5
<b>Total number of places</b>	20
<b>Number of children on roll</b>	36
<b>Name of provider</b>	Elmhurst House Pre School Limited
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	not applicable
<b>Telephone number</b>	07972298574

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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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