

St Ambrose Pre-School

School House, Leswell Street, Kidderminster, Worcestershire, DY10 1RP

Inspection date	01/05/2014
Previous inspection date	13/11/2013

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	2
	Previous inspection:	4
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's personal, social and emotional development is promoted very well by staff. Children are confident, happy, settled and secure, and strong relationships have been formed with staff.
- A key strength of the pre-school is how effectively staff work with parents. The manager and staff form excellent relationships from the start, which supports children's individual personal care, well-being and educational needs extremely well.
- The staff team have worked hard since the last inspection, positively addressing the actions and recommendations raised. They are committed and enthusiastic about developing the service further. They demonstrate a good understanding of the safeguarding and welfare requirements and take all necessary steps to keep children safe and well.
- The manager is passionate about the pre-school and has a clear drive for improvement through effective self-evaluation and regular action planning. Consequently, children's welfare, learning and achievements are well supported.

It is not yet outstanding because

- There is scope to extend opportunities for children to develop their critical thinking skills and ability to respond to questions.
- Staff are not always consistent in their approach to children's behaviour.

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 various activities in the pre-school and outdoors.
- The inspector looked at children's learning journeys and observation, assessment and planning documentation.
- The inspector checked evidence of suitability and qualifications of staff working with children.
- The inspector spoke with the pre-school manager, individual staff and children at appropriate times throughout the inspection.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation with the pre-school manager.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents and carers spoken to on the day and in written comments made by them.

Inspector

Trisha Turney

Full report

Information about the setting

St Ambrose Pre-School opened in 1982 and is on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. It is committee run and operates from a self-contained building in the grounds of St Ambrose's Primary School, close to the town centre of Kidderminster. The pre-school serves both the local and surrounding areas. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area, and older children attend physical education sessions in the school hall. The pre-school is open from 8.55am until 3pm each weekday during term time only. Children may attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 28 children on roll who are in the early years age range. The pre-school supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and children who speak English as an additional language. The pre-school employs eight members of staff. Of these, one has a level 4 qualification in early childhood studies and seven hold early years qualifications at level 3. The pre-school 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 critical thinking skills further, by extending the use of open-ended questions as children engage in activities and play
- provide children with clear and consistent guidance on acceptable behaviour, by making sure that staff have a good understanding of the agreed strategies to support this.

Inspection judgements

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

Staff have a sound knowledge of the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. As a result, children thrive and are well motivated to learn in this good quality pre-school. Staff provide an exciting, stimulating and well-organised environment, with a range of resources to promote physical development, including climbing. There is a sharp focus on helping children to acquire communication and language skills and supporting their physical, personal, social and emotional development. Staff join in children's play, role modelling and extending their vocabulary, appropriate to children's stage of development. For example, children thoroughly enjoy their role play as doctors, nurses and police officers, and staff participate by pretending to be the patient as children pretend to administer injections and apply bandages. However, not all staff are confident in using open-ended questioning techniques to consistently encourage children to think critically and make their own suggestions.

Children develop their communication and language skills as they show interest in familiar sounds. Staff encourage them to repeat familiar words and give opportunities for children to speak and listen in their own language in order to participate fully. Children are given one-to-one attention to follow up their individual learning and development needs, including helping children to understand and use English. Consequently, children are highly motivated to learn, which means that they consistently display the characteristics of effective learning. Children develop early counting skills as they count how many pieces of toast they have eaten at snack time. Staff skilfully extend this learning further by asking children to add another piece and say how many they have altogether. This means children are developing early mathematical skills to help prepare them for more formal learning at school. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive beneficial levels of support from staff who are very knowledgeable about their individual needs and circumstances. A range of resources provided by the pre-school ensure that all children's language and communication needs are met.

Children are keen and eager to learn because staff take great care to watch carefully and notice what interests them. They then plan activities that are relevant and meaningful so that the children are often totally engrossed in what they are doing. For example, staff provide a fruit and vegetable stall in the role play area following the children's interest in the current planned theme around vegetables. Later in the day, children enjoy looking at different vegetables and use paper plates and a variety of craft resources to imaginatively create their own plates of vegetables to take home. Staff encourage children to try different ways to use materials to create their pictures. This means they develop hand and finger control as they manipulate tissue paper to resemble vegetable shapes, and they are delighted with the results. Children demonstrate growing competence in technology as they use the computer to play educational games. They are gaining a good understanding of the world through play, and this helps them to develop skills for the future. They have planted a variety of herbs and learn how to care for them while they grow.

Relationships with parents are very effective and make a valuable contribution to meeting all children's needs. Parents contribute to their child's learning journey, the progress check at age two and development summaries each term. This means they are fully involved in their child's learning and progression. Staff keep parents updated on their child's day through informal conversations at the end of the session. Parents are invited to make an appointment with their child's key person at any time. This gives them the opportunity to look at their child's learning journey and discuss their progress. Regular emails are sent to parents detailing planned activities and suggesting ways they can support the setting. For example, when planned activities include the use of vegetables to explore size, shape, colour and weight, parents provide some of the vegetables for the children to use. This means that parents are kept fully involved in their child's activities at the pre-school, which in turn enables them to continue their child's learning at home.

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

Children feel safe and secure as there are warm and caring relationships in place with staff, which ensures they are eager and are well motivated to learn. Staff have a good

understanding of how to safeguard children. They monitor their activities closely and remind them how to play safely. Outdoor play is managed well as staff supervise children effectively and ensure they are safe. Most staff encourage children to become aware of how to keep themselves safe through careful explanation. However, there are times when staff are inconsistent in their approach to children's behaviour. For example, some staff tell children to 'get off the table' or 'don't run', without explaining why such behaviour is not acceptable. Children thrive exploring the outdoor area as they use wheeled toys pushchairs and climb aboard the large wooden train. The recently refurbished outdoor area provides an abundance of learning experiences and ensures that children can play safely. Children are able to spend time in the fresh air and keep healthy and active while enhancing and developing their physical skills. Staff encourage children's sense of adventure as they support them in making trains and dens, promoting their imaginative skills. The indoor learning environment promotes learning very well because of the wealth of resources and calm atmosphere. Children benefit from working in small groups with their key person, which creates further opportunities for individual interests and needs to be met in a secure, communication-friendly environment.

Children are well supported when they first join the pre-school. Parents are invited to stay with their child for initial sessions as they settle in. Staff collect information from their parents, and key persons meet with parents during the first few weeks. This gives staff and parents opportunities to share aspects of their child's needs and to ensure there is continuity of care when the child starts at the pre-school. The effective links with local schools encourage children to settle when they move into full-time school. This is because staff prepare children well through discussions about the school and invite teachers into the pre-school to meet the children.

Children follow good health and hygiene practices with little reminding necessary. They automatically wash their hands after creative activities and before eating. Children's manners at the pre-school are impeccable. They say 'please' and 'thank you' consistently when speaking to both adults and children. During snack time children help to serve their food and to clear their cups and plates afterwards, practising their independence skills. Staff are well deployed throughout mealtimes to engage with children and provide any assistance. This ensures that such routines are calm, sociable experiences. Fire exits are clearly signed and unobstructed, and children practise the evacuation drill regularly. Therefore, they learn how to keep themselves safe in an emergency and how to leave the premises quickly and safely.

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

The pre-school has made good progress since the last inspection and close attention has been given to improvements in all aspects of the provision. The manager has implemented a broad range of improvements that carefully consider the needs of the children that attend. Careful consultation with parents, children, external agencies and the local authority enable the manager and staff to take a reflective view of the provision. This provides a firm foundation for the pre-school to provide care and education that supports all aspects of children's learning and development. Through this, the quality of care and

learning for all children has improved. The setting works with other local provision by sharing positive practice, which further drives forward improvement. The local authority improvement advisors work closely with the setting to support the manager and staff in sustaining improvement. The partnership with local settings is flourishing and supports children's transfer into school.

There are secure arrangements in place for the safeguarding of children. Staff are well informed about the procedures they must follow if they have concerns about the welfare of a child in their care. Steps are taken to minimise hazards and to keep children safe. Suitably robust recruitment procedures help to ensure that staff are suitable for their roles. The manager acts competently as a mentor for staff on an ongoing basis. For example, she holds regular supervision meetings, in addition to working alongside them, which help to enable and support staff to evaluate their practice and identify areas for their professional development. Effective monitoring of the educational programmes ensures that a varied range of experiences are planned and provided to help children make progress across the areas of learning. Staff observe and note children's achievements in a development record, which enables them to plan a suitable range of challenging activities based on children's interests. The manager uses their self-evaluation document well, which shows the setting's strengths and highlights areas in which they plan to adapt, develop or change. In addition, they work closely with the local authority in producing a focused improvement plan, which supports them in improving the learning environment for children. For example, they have implemented a tracking system to carefully monitor children's development to ensure they are making consistently good progress. Further plans include developing a sensory area outdoors.

There is a very strong partnership in place with parents. The pre-school staff provide parents with valuable information regarding their child's progress. Parent questionnaires are valued and their comments and ideas are greatly appreciated by staff and used to further enhance the setting. Parents and carers speak extremely highly of the provision and many express their support for the pre-school. Feedback from parents highlights that they value the service. They comment that their children make good progress as staff are friendly, informative, kind and caring, and that the pre-school has excellent teaching and good communication. Children are also listened to and observed so they also contribute to the evaluation process. Staff consistently adapt and introduce resources based on what the children want. For example, the indoor slide and climbing equipment were returned to the playroom when children said they missed playing with them after they were removed to allow room for other resources. Effective provision is in place to secure timely support for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities to ensure they achieve well. These productive partnerships with parents and other professional agencies provide significant educational, health and social support to children and families as and when it is required.

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	205482
Local authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	963148
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 17
Total number of places	40
Number of children on roll	28
Name of provider	St Ambrose Playgroup Committee
Date of previous inspection	13/11/2013
Telephone number	07980 182741

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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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