

A* Stars Pre-School

Riverview Terrace, London Road, Purfleet, Essex, RM19 1QT

Inspection date

24/06/2014

Previous inspection date

21/10/2013

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This inspection:

3

Previous inspection:

4

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend	2
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The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision requires improvement

- Children make good progress in their learning and development as staff use effective teaching strategies and plan stimulating activities that cover all areas of learning, through both indoor and outdoor play.
- Partnerships with parents are positive and this helps children feel emotionally secure. Parents are warmly welcomed and encouraged to share information about their children's learning and development at home.
- Staff give priority to the safety of children and suitably support children's growing understanding of how to keep themselves safe and healthy.

It is not yet good because

- The pre-school is not consistently providing the highest quality childcare as there are insufficient staff to provide contingency cover during staff absences or sickness.
- Staff have not established firm links with local primary schools to promote continuity in learning and smooth transfers for children starting full-time education.
- Staff are not consistently providing additional challenge to extend the mathematical skills of older or more able 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 in the indoor and outdoor learning environments.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation with the provider.
- The inspector held discussions with the provider, acting manager, staff and children.
- The inspector viewed a sample of children's development records.
- The inspector saw evidence of suitability and qualifications of staff and volunteers, self-evaluation, risk assessment and policies and procedures.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents spoken to on the day and from surveys carried out by the pre-school.

Inspector

Patricia Champion

Full report

Information about the setting

A* Stars Pre-School opened in 2013 and is privately owned. It operates from a church hall in Purfleet, Essex. The pre-school serves the immediate locality and also the surrounding areas. The pre-school opens Monday to Friday, during school term times. Sessions are from 9am until 12noon. Children attend for a variety of sessions. Children are cared for in two playrooms and have access to an enclosed area for outdoor play. There are currently 10 children attending, who are within the early years age group. The pre-school receives funding for the provision of free early education for three- and four-year-old children. It supports children who speak English as an additional language. There are currently three staff working directly with children, two of whom have an appropriate early years qualification at level 3. The pre-school receives support from the local authority. It is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

To meet the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage the provider must:

- improve staffing arrangements to meet the needs of children, by ensuring that there is available staff to cover staff absences and sickness.

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

- develop the links with the early years professionals in the local schools, to promote continuity and smooth transitions in children's learning
- enhance children's active learning, for example, by extending the range of resources that offer mathematical challenge and encourage children to explore size, weight and measure.

Inspection judgements

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

Children make good progress as they engage in purposeful learning experiences. This is because staff have a good knowledge and understanding of the learning and development requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Staff successfully provide opportunities for children to be busy and motivated learners by using effective teaching strategies. There is an interesting blend of activities that children choose for themselves and experiences delivered by adults, both indoors and outside. Staff are now taking more

account of children's individual preferred learning styles. Consequently, the outdoor area has been imaginatively developed so that children can engage in role-play scenarios with their friends or explore sensory materials, such as, sand, water or compost in the fresh air. Observation, ongoing assessment and the tracking of children's progress are focused and build from an initial assessment that parents also contribute to. Each child has a learning and development file, in which observations are evaluated. The required progress check for children aged between two and three years is suitably completed and shared with parents. The key persons ensure they identify specific aims for individual children. As a result, activity planning is built on children's next steps in learning. In addition, the focused adult-led activities are successfully designed to build on the evaluation of children's interests and activities.

Staff use high quality interactions to ensure that children make good progress with their language and communication skills. They explain and demonstrate activities, to prompt children's curiosity and they use spontaneous events well to captivate children and introduce new descriptive words. For example, when children find spiders and bugs in the outdoor area, staff use open-ended questions to encourage children to think for themselves and give interesting answers about the insects and creatures they find. As a result, children extend their knowledge and vocabulary because staff model clear language. Children who speak English as an additional language are supported well. Staff obtain key words in the child's home language and use some visual prompts to support understanding. They also work with parents in order to understand and assess children's development of speech in their home language, before planning how best to support them in developing their use of English. Parents say that children soon start to use their English words when playing at home.

Children effectively develop the necessary skills to support their readiness for the next stage and to prepare them for starting school. Structured times are planned into the timetable, such as sitting in groups at story time to help with children's concentration and listening skills. Parents become involved in children's learning when book bags are taken home, so that children can share stories with their families. Children recognise their names on cards for self-registration and staff encourage them to consider the phonic sounds of letters and practise their early writing skills. Staff offer challenging experiences for the older or more able children in most areas of learning. Daily routines are used well to encourage children to count, calculate and point out numbers. For example, children work out how many plates are needed on the snack table and divide the play dough to share with their friends. There are some opportunities for children to explore volume and capacity when they tip sand or water between containers of different sizes. However, there is scope to extend children's mathematical skills further, by providing more opportunities and resources for children to explore size, weight and measurement, for example, by using tools, such as rulers and measuring scales.

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

Children receive a warm and friendly greeting from staff when they arrive at the pre-school. Most children separate from parents confidently and are eager to play and learn.

Staff work closely with parents when children join the pre-school to obtain detailed information about each child's interests, capabilities and care needs. This ensures that the transfer from home into the setting is a smooth process and promotes children's physical and emotional well-being. Each child is appointed a key person, who provides parents with a regular flow of information about their child through the communication books and verbal feedback. However, there has been a significant staff turnover since the last inspection that has resulted in changes in the key-person system. Nevertheless, children have formed attachments with the current staff and happily go to them for comfort, reassurance and support. Due to the low number of children attending the pre-school, only the smaller hall is being used as a playroom. This benefits children who tend to be shy and helps them gain confidence while working in small groups. Consequently, children generally feel emotionally secure. Staff have started talking to older children about starting school and ensure that they have developed the appropriate personal and social skills to prepare them for the changes ahead. However, children's moves to new settings are not consistently well-planned to ensure all children are ready for the move. This is because links with local primary schools have not been established to ensure that staff can pass on important information to help children to make a seamless transfer into full-time education.

Children learn about the need for control and responsible behaviour through staff's positive, consistent approach. They play harmoniously and immediately stop and listen to staffs' instructions when there are changes in the routine. With gentle reminders from staff, children are developing an awareness of how to keep themselves safe. They are mindful to climb carefully on outdoor apparatus and know to wear their sun hats to protect themselves from the hot sun in warm weather. Activities are planned to develop children's awareness of road safety. Children use cutlery and scissors carefully and know to place these safely back onto the table when they have finished with them. Children learn table manners and social skills as they sit together to eat snack. These routines are also used well to encourage children to develop their independence skills. For example, children learn to pour their own drinks, spread toppings onto crackers or toast and independently manage their personal hygiene routines.

Children learn about healthy lifestyles as they exercise and take part in physical activities in the fresh air each day. They learn about the food that is good for them through discussion and by planting and tending vegetables they grow in the outdoor area. Staff are knowledgeable about allergies and special dietary requirements so they can meet individual needs. They have also completed first-aid training so they can deal with any emergency situations. Staff have established appropriate routines to keep the premises acceptably clean. Nappy training and toilet training is sensitively and discreetly undertaken to preserve children's dignity.

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

The provider and staff have an appropriate understanding of the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. The pre-school has comprehensive policies and procedures,

which are shared with staff and parents. Since the last inspection the provider and staff have worked hard to make the outdoor area a safer and more stimulating environment for children. As a result, the actions from the last inspection have been successfully addressed. Risk assessment is more robust and supervision of children in the outdoor area has been strengthened. The provider and staff have a reasonable understanding of their safeguarding responsibilities and have completed basic safeguarding training. The local authority child protection guidelines are easily accessible, so that staff have the procedures to follow if they have concerns about a child's welfare. The provider has completed training to act as a designated person for safeguarding children and this means she has a clear understanding of her responsibilities in relation to safer recruitment. Consequently, all staff and volunteers have now completed the appropriate background checks through the Disclosure and Barring Service.

The provider is ensuring that children's progress and staff performance is monitored more closely. Staff are using tracking documents successfully to ensure that there are no gaps in learning and can identify when progress is less than expected. Staff performance is monitored through regular supervision meetings, to ensure that training and development needs are appropriately identified. However, since the last inspection there has been some instability in relation to staffing. An acting manager is now in place as the previous manager of the pre-school recently left. The local authority is offering support and additional training, to ensure that the acting manager quickly gains all the necessary skills to efficiently manage the pre-school. However, there have been difficulties recruiting new staff and this means that the staff team are fully stretched while delivering activities, completing assessment records, dealing with domestic tasks and trying to ensure all children remain happy and settled. In addition, there are insufficient staff available to cover for staff absences or sickness, which means the pre-school is occasionally unable to open. There is no impact on children's safety because the required ratios are met, but this does have an impact on the continuity of care provided, which means children's well-being is not always fully supported.

Friendly and helpful partnerships with parents have been established. The entrance hall displays plenty of useful information for parents, such as suggestions to support children's communication skills at home or information about events within the community. Newsletters are regularly distributed and parents have recently had the opportunity to offer their views and make suggestions about the pre-school. Parents say staff are approachable and they appreciate the daily communication books that update them on their children's activities and routines. In addition, consultation times have now been arranged, when parents can meet with key persons more formally, to discuss their child's progress and achievements. Staff understand their responsibility to work closely with other childcare professionals to support any additional needs a child may have. However, there is room to develop the partnerships with local primary schools to promote continuity in children's care and learning.

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	EY462704
Local authority	Thurrock
Inspection number	963003
Type of provision	Full-time provision
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 17
Total number of places	35
Number of children on roll	10
Name of provider	Ibironke Justina Harrison
Date of previous inspection	21/10/2013
Telephone number	07757672840

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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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