

Little Explorers

St. Anne's School - Church Hall, Lynton Avenue, Weeping Cross, STAFFORD, Staffs, ST17 0EA

Inspection date	17/09/2014
Previous inspection date	11/11/2013

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	3
	Previous inspection:	3
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

- Staff provide a welcoming and safe environment and use risk assessment well to minimise any identified risks. Consequently, children are able to move safely and freely indoors and outdoors.
- Staff are warm and responsive to the care needs of the children and give them the time to freely play and explore at their own leisure and, therefore, children enjoy their time at the pre-school.
- Staff adopt a friendly and open manner with the parents and carers, which results in them easily sharing information about their children's needs and achievements. This in turn means staff know the children well and form positive relationships with them.

It is not yet good because

- The programme of activities, use of resources and the teaching methods used to further promote children's learning in some areas lacks challenge. Therefore, the older and more able children's learning is not always fully extended.
- The monitoring of the educational programmes and staff supervision and coaching are not consistently focused on improving the quality of teaching, learning and experiences for children. Therefore, the quality of teaching is variable.
- The leadership team have not identified all areas for further development and improvement plans are not sufficiently focused on improving the achievement of all 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 playroom and outdoors.
- The inspector held a meeting with the manager and deputies and carried out a joint observation with the manager.
The inspector looked at children's assessment records, planning documentation, evidence of suitability of staff working within the pre-school, the provider's action plans and a range of other documentation.
- The inspector also took account of the views of parents spoken to on the day and those included in parent surveys.

Inspector

Parm Sansoyer

Full report

Information about the setting

Little Explorers opened in 2002 and is registered on the Early Years Register. It operates from St. Anne's Church Hall in Weeping Cross, Stafford. All children share access to a secure outdoor play area. The setting serves children from the local and surrounding areas. The pre-school opens each weekday from 9am to 3pm during the school term. Children are able to attend for various sessions or on a full-time basis. There are currently 19 children on roll in the early years age group. The pre-school is in receipt of funding for the provision of free early years education for three- and four-year-olds. It supports children with English as an additional language. Seven members of staff work with the children, which include two apprentices. Of these, four hold a qualification at level 3 in early years and three are unqualified. Two unqualified staff are currently working towards a level 3 qualification. The pre-school receives support from the local authority.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- improve teaching by making better use of information about children's next steps to inform planning, and include more adult-led activities and purposeful play to further extend the older and more able children's learning in communication and language, mathematics and literacy
- improve the arrangements in place for the supervision of staff and provide better coaching to all staff, including apprentices, to improve the quality of teaching.

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

- make better use of available resources to provide a more rich and varied environment to further support children's learning and development
- strengthen further the role of the leadership team by more successfully monitoring the educational programmes, the quality of teaching and ensuring well-focused improvement plans are in place to improve the achievement of all children.

Inspection judgements

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

Positive relationships are established with parents and carers at the point of their child's induction and these contribute to the initial developmental assessment carried out on children. Consequently, all children, including those with English as an additional language, are valued and supported well to help them settle. Parents and carers receive daily feedback about their child's day and they readily share information about their children's needs and achievements. This results in a steady two-way flow of information to help support the children's care and educational needs. The educational programmes cover the seven areas of learning, which keeps children interested and occupied and helps them acquire the basic skills required in preparation for school. However, teaching and learning is variable, and on occasions it lacks challenge. For example, the educational programmes for mathematics and literacy do not incorporate enough adult-led activities or challenging resources. This means the older and more able children do not always benefit from sufficient challenge or support in their learning. Staff know the children well as they make regular observations of what children do, like and enjoy and, therefore, plan for their interests. However, all staff do not consistently use information about children's progress to provide rich and challenging experiences, in particular, to further extend the learning for older and more able children.

The programme for communication and language requires improvement. Staff use stories, singing, musical instruments and music to capture the children's interest and to encourage them to increase their language skills. Staff also use morning registration, snack and lunchtime to encourage children to talk freely about their interests and listen to each other. However, staff interaction with children is variable. For example, all staff do not consistently place enough emphasis on increasing the older and more able children's language skills by introducing new vocabulary, ideas and concepts during activities. This is because activities do not always have a clear enough learning intention and, on occasions, the focus on learning is therefore lost. In contrast, when the activity is more purposeful and there is a clear focus for the activity, children's learning is extended better. Therefore, staff interaction and teaching is variable and requires improvement. Staff ensure the daily routine includes opportunities for children to freely choose activities and increase their self-help skills and independence at snack time and lunchtime. For example, children eagerly spread butter on their bread and carefully pour their drinks. The programme for supporting the children's physical development is good. Children benefit from freely accessing small physical play equipment indoors, such as balls and inflatable hoppers. In addition, the outdoor environment offer a challenging range of resources for children to test and extend their physical skills, explore and investigate and be imaginative. Children's understanding of the world is developing well. Staff provide regular opportunities for children to explore outside so that they to begin to learn about their natural environment, as well as being encouraged to observe and talk about changes in the weather and seasons. For example, staff, along with the children, have created a 'bug hotel' to attract insects, and children are keen to discover what insects they can find under the logs. Children have also followed the life cycle of the butterfly and have been growing peas, carrots, potatoes, celery and various flowers. Staff also provide meaningful opportunities for children to learn about the wider world and value their own and others' customs. For example, children have tasted food from other cultures, such as Polish, Indian and Chinese food, and made comparisons. In addition, they learn about various traditions during the festivals of Chinese New Year, Diwali and Easter.

The programme for mathematics and literacy require improvement, as these are under-developed in some aspects. Staff provide opportunities for children to begin to count, sort, match and consider shape and size through using a varied range of construction toys, puzzles, games and the computer. However, children do not always show a good level of interest in what is provided and staff do not use the resources children are interested in, such as role play or sand and water, creatively enough to capture children's interest. For example, by using sand and water to promote mathematical concepts, such as size, weight, measures and capacity, to further extend the children's mathematical learning. Staff provide a varied range of opportunities for children to develop an interest in early writing skills as they use a variety of writing materials, such as paint, pencils, crayons and chalk to make marks. In addition, children are beginning to recognise their own name at morning registration. However, not all staff place enough focus on reinforcing letters and sounds through a varied range of rhyming and listening activities, to further extend the older and more able children's learning. Staff provide a broad range of opportunities for children to explore and express their ideas through using a variety of arts and crafts activities. For example, children experience a variety of painting techniques and make collage and models from various materials. They use their senses to explore resources, such as cooked pasta, jelly and dough. Children enjoy their time playing imaginatively with resources, such as the cars, garage, farm and play people and in the role-play area.

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

There is an appropriate key-person system in place, which means staff get to know the parents and carers and know the children's personalities and meet their care needs well. They spend time getting to know the new children and form positive relationships with them to help foster their personal, social and emotional development. Children are mostly well behaved and respond well to gentle reminders and direction from staff to keep themselves safe, for example, when reminded not to run indoors, in order to keep themselves and others safe. Children move freely and safely in their environment because staff take positive steps to ensure hazards are kept to a minimum. In addition, topics, such as 'People who help us' and visits from the paramedics, police and crossing patrol warden, helps reinforce the message of keeping safe.

Children are cared for in one room and confidently explore their environment and when new and interesting experiences are offered they are keen to explore them. Overall the space is used well and staff are deployed effectively to ensure children are supervised. However, staff do not always use available resources to provide a rich and varied environment to further support children's learning and development. Therefore, planned goals in learning are not met consistently well enough. Strong links are forged with the main feeder schools, which results in the teachers from the schools visiting the pre-school and staff sharing information about the children's care and education.

Children benefit from a healthy snack consisting of fresh fruit and vegetables and a carbohydrate, such as crackers or bread, with drink of milk. Parents and carers provide a packed lunch for those children who stay for both sessions and staff encourage them to

eat their healthy options first from their lunchboxes. This helps children understand the importance of foods that are good for their bodies and staff also teach children about the importance of exercise. There are effective hygiene practices in place to prevent the spread of infection when changing nappies, and all areas are kept satisfactorily clean.

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

All staff are appropriately qualified in child protection issues and understand their roles and responsibilities in relation to this. There are sufficient systems in place to ensure staff are suitably vetted and inducted in relation to health and safety issues, safeguarding and child protection. Effective written risk assessments and daily checks of the environment help secure children's safety.

The senior leadership team consists of the committee, manager and the two deputies who are also involved in the care of children. Together they support a small staff team who are keen to improve the service offered. Since the last inspection some progress has been made and, although the previous actions raised have been tackled, some improvements are not fully embedded and so some changes are still ongoing. Some of the achievements made since the last inspection include, providing training and support for staff, including parents views in the self-evaluation process and improving the documentation used to observe and record children's development. However, actions taken to improve teaching and learning have not been tackled swiftly enough. In addition, there has been a recent change in organisation, with the manager only being employed one day week, due to financial constraints, and so one of the deputies is acting manager for the rest of the time. However, roles and responsibilities have not been clearly defined in relation to who will take responsibility for overseeing the educational programmes and this has affected how well the educational programmes and the quality of teaching is monitored. For example, although staff have benefited from targeted training since the last inspection, the arrangements in place for the supervision and the coaching of staff and apprentices is not well established and not always sufficiently focused on improving the quality of teaching. Consequently, the quality of teaching remains variable and requires improvement. In addition, the ongoing self-evaluation and action plans in place are not sufficiently focused on further improving teaching, learning and experiences for all children.

Parents and carers spoken to on the day of the inspection are happy with the serviced they receive as they say their children are happy and enjoy attending. Parent surveys also indicate high levels of satisfaction. Parents and carers are kept appropriately informed about the policies and procedures, curriculum and snacks on offer through the pre-school's notice boards and regular newsletters. Systems to keep parents informed about their children's achievements continue to develop. For example, daily discussions are used well and parents and carers have access to their children's developmental records. Staff understand the importance of maintaining links with other professionals working with children, when the need arises, to support the care, education and welfare of children.

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. We re-inspect nurseries and pre-schools judged as requires improvement within 12 months of the date of 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		There were no children present at the time of the inspection. The inspection judgement is that the provider continues to meet the requirements for registration.
Not met		There were no children present at the time of the inspection. 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	EY232713
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	962739
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 5
Total number of places	48
Number of children on roll	19
Name of provider	St. Anne's Club Committee
Date of previous inspection	11/11/2013
Telephone number	07810847672

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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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