

St Helen's Pre-School

Cathedral Hall, Ingrave Road, BRENTWOOD, Essex, CM15 8AT

Inspection date	07/10/2014
Previous inspection date	22/10/2013

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

- Staff offer a wide range of well-presented activities and resources covering all the areas of learning, effectively promoting children's learning and development.
- Teaching is good. Staff skilfully interact with children to encourage their imaginations and extend and challenge their play and learning. This means that children make sustained progress over time.
- Staff are passionate and committed to the continual improvement of the pre-school. Therefore, striving to always provide the best care and education for the children.
- Children are happy, confident and secure because staff build positive relationships with them. Safeguarding of children is given top priority to promote their safety and welfare.
- Staff are positive role models. They are consistent in how they deal with behaviour management. Consequently, children learn how to behave and play well alongside their friends.

It is not yet outstanding because

- The timing of some routines does not always consistently offer children sufficient time to engage in sustained, uninterrupted play.
- On occasion, the monitoring of some assessments does not fully reflect the range of groups of children attending the pre-school.

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 indoors and outside.
- 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 inspector carried out a joint observation of a teaching activity with the manager.
- The inspector spoke with the manager, staff and parents at appropriate times throughout the inspection.

Inspector

Jemma Hudson

Full report

Information about the setting

St Helen's Pre-School was registered in 1986 and relocated to its current premises in 2005. It is on the Early Years Register. The pre-school operates from within a church hall in the centre of Brentwood, Essex, and is privately owned. It serves the local area and is accessible to all children. There is an enclosed area available for outdoor play. The pre-school employs four members of childcare staff, all of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications at levels 2 and 3. The pre-school opens four days a week during term time. Sessions are from 8.45am to 2.45pm on Monday and Tuesday and 8.45am to 11.45am on Wednesday and Thursday. A lunch club operates on Monday and Tuesday. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 14 children on roll who are in the early years age group. The pre-school supports children who speak English as an additional language. It 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:

- review the organisation of routines, such as circle time and snack, so that these sessions do not interrupt children's concentration and involvement in activities
- enhance the already good monitoring of children's assessment to track the progress of a range of different groups, as well as individual children, in order to target any specific interventions even more precisely.

Inspection judgements

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

Children receive a warm and friendly welcome to the pre-school. They enjoy a wide range of well-resourced activities that support and promote their continued learning and effectively meet their needs. The planned activities cover the seven areas of learning. Staff plan well, taking into account each child's interests and age and stage of development. This good planning, along with quality teaching, means that children continue to develop skills and attributes needed for future learning. The pre-school is very well organised so that children can make good choices to support their interests and play. For instance, children enjoy experimenting with the variety of interesting resources in the creative area and spend time exploring books and story props in the attractive book corner. Resources are very well presented which supports children to extend their own play and learning. For example, the small world farm is displayed with real straw for the children to investigate and non-fiction animal books encourage children to enjoy books as a source of information.

Children enjoy leading their own play and taking part in activities which are guided by adults. Staff interactions with children are strong. They talk to children and consistently use open-ended questioning to extend their communication and language. Visual props and signs are used throughout the pre-school which ensures that all children, including those with English as an additional language, are well supported to develop their understanding and vocabulary. Staff skillfully support children to develop their imaginative skills through creative activities. For example, a group of children enjoyed experimenting with the clean mud they had made and talking to staff about how it felt, oozing between their fingers. These quality interactions engage children in sustained play and support them to develop their social and communication skills. Children have access to a garden area which supports them in making choices and directing their own learning. They enjoy using the wide range of resources, which include a snail and slug garden, where they have the opportunity to observe and feed the animals.

Staff know children well because they take time to meet them and their parents. Staff gather information from parents and children as they settle in. Children's learning journals show good observations linked to the areas of learning. Staff use these observations to track children's progress effectively and highlight areas of weakness. Timely interventions ensure that all needs are appropriately met and that children develop the skills and attributes needed to support their move on to school. Assessments are precise and robust and next steps are used to inform planning. This ensures that children's needs are met and supports them to make sustained progress over time.

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

Children share warm relationships with the approachable and friendly staff. New children settle quickly into the nursery. A well-established key-person system is in place to help children build relationships with their special member of staff. This supports their emotional needs and, as a result, children are motivated to learn. Children demonstrate a positive approach to learning, and behaviour in the pre-school is good. Staff provide excellent role models, interact well with children and engage them in meaningful conversation, which results in an extremely calm, relaxed and friendly atmosphere.

Staff develop and extend children's understanding of the importance of a healthy lifestyle that involves physical exercise and a healthy diet. Children benefit from regular fresh air and exercise during outdoor play. They have a wide range of opportunities to learn about healthy lifestyles, for example, they are offered a range of nutritious healthy snacks. Children have access to water throughout the session and are offered water or milk with their snack. Children sit together and are very sociable. They talk to each other and share experiences. Staff use this opportunity to encourage talk about the morning, what the children have done and what they are going to do after pre-school. In this way, children's interests are further extended and they learn to listen to each other and form opinions. Children have the opportunity to participate in sessions such as story time or circle time. However, these daily routines are not always effectively organised to fully engage children's interest. For example, children's play is interrupted when the registration circle time occurs.

Children's well-being is given the highest priority at the pre-school. Staff have appropriate training in first aid and are very well aware of the medical or dietary needs of children in their care. Effective procedures are in place and are regularly reviewed to support children's welfare effectively. Staff know and understand the needs of all children. They provide any extra support needed to ensure all children, including those with English as an additional language, are included in activities to promote their good progress. There is a very strong family feel to the pre-school as many children attend with siblings. The very stable staff team means that staff know the families extremely well. Consequently, all children feel secure and make excellent emotional attachments while at pre-school. Children's transitions within the pre-school are managed sensitively to ensure they are emotionally ready for coping with imminent changes. Their move to school is supported well through visits and sharing records with feeder schools.

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

The managers in the nursery have a good understanding of the requirements to safeguard children. Staff knowledge of safeguarding is robust. They have a good understanding of the signs of abuse and the action to take if they have any concerns about a child's welfare. Their practice is supported by secure policies and procedures. The premises are kept secure and thorough risk assessments are undertaken, ensuring children can play safely and freely. Staff work well as a team to promote the smooth running of the session. They are well deployed, indoors and outside, ensuring children's safety and supporting them in their play and learning. All staff have undergone the required vetting procedures, including Disclosure and Barring Service checks, to assess their suitability.

The pre-school is managed well. The manager and her team are reflective and they demonstrate a commitment to the continual development of the whole provision. All staff demonstrate a good knowledge of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Since the last inspection, the manager and her team have worked effectively to address the actions raised. They understand their responsibility to promote the learning and development of all children through a balance of child-initiated and adult-led activities. This means that children are consistently provided with a wide range of purposeful experiences to meet their needs. All staff hold relevant childcare qualifications and are keen to continually update their professional development. The managers regularly meet with staff to discuss and share any ideas, and to further promote effective outcomes for children. They carefully monitor staff performance, both informally, through working alongside the staff, and more formally, through annual appraisals and monthly supervisions to identify training needs. This helps to promote good outcomes for children. The managers monitor educational programmes effectively for individual children. However, they are only just starting to consider the varying learning styles of groups of children for example, differences in how boys and girls learn, and how this may have an impact on planning and securing precise intervention.

Parents value the strong partnership and relationships they have with the pre-school. They speak highly of staff and are delighted with the activities they provide for children. They typically say that staff are friendly and caring. One parent also commented on how easily

her child made the transition to school as a result of the support she received from all of the staff. The pre-school has developed successful strategies to work closely with parents. Consequently, children have continuity of care and their needs are very well 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. 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	EY312453
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	963240
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 5
Total number of places	26
Number of children on roll	14
Name of provider	St Helen's Pre-School Partnership
Date of previous inspection	22/10/2013
Telephone number	01277265293

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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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