

Pilgrims Way Playgroup

The Leys Primary School, Ripon Road, STEVENAGE, Hertfordshire, SG1 4QZ

Inspection date	17/11/2014
Previous inspection date	05/03/2009

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	2
	Previous inspection:	2
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

- The manager and staff effectively safeguard children by efficiently implementing the robust policies and procedures.
- Staff use successful strategies to engage and support all parents, encouraging them to contribute with observations from home to their child's learning record. They work closely with other agencies involved with children. As a result, children's learning is supported well.
- The manager provides high-quality supervision and support to staff, promoting effective teaching, and care procedures to support all children's learning and development.
- Staff plan a varied and imaginative programme of activities in tune with children's interests and enthusiasms to support their all-round learning and development.
- Staff provide lots of support to both parents and children in preparing them for the move to nursery or school.

It is not yet outstanding because

- On occasions, some staff do not always use a wide range of teaching strategies, such as modelling language and open-ended questions, to enrich children's learning and challenge them to think and formulate ideas themselves.

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 playgroup and talked with the staff.
- The inspector viewed the areas of the premises and garden used by children.
The inspector checked evidence of the suitability of household members, looked at children's assessment records, planning documentation, and a range of other documentation, including the safeguarding procedures.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents, through discussion.
- The inspector discussed the self-evaluation with the manager.

Inspector

Lindsay Hare

Full report

Information about the setting

Pilgrims Way Playgroup was registered in 2003 and is on the Early Years Register. It is situated in The Leys Primary School in Stevenage, and is managed by a voluntary committee. The playgroup serves the local area and is accessible to all children. It operates from a detached classroom and there is an enclosed area available for outdoor play. The playgroup opens Monday to Friday during term time only. Sessions are from 8.40am until 11.40am, and 12.30pm until 3.30pm. Children attend for a variety of sessions and are able to attend the lunch club between sessions. There are currently 47 children attending who are in the early years age group. The playgroup provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. It supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language and children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The playgroup employs seven members of childcare staff; all of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 2 or 3.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- enhance the use of a wider range of teaching strategies, for example, by encouraging all staff to use even more open-ended questions and modelling language to enrich children's learning and challenge them to think and find out more.

Inspection judgements

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

Children enjoy a good range of learning experiences that reflect their individual needs and interests and therefore capture their attention and imagination. Staff are well qualified and skilled at quickly getting to know the children, who engage in their play well and are active learners. The key person's assessment of children's learning is thorough and helps to ensure that each child is developing in line with expectations, based on their age and ability. Staff use observations to identify children's next steps in their learning and to inform the planning. They effectively complete detailed assessments in relation to the progress check for children between the ages of two and three years. This is shared with parents and is used to identify any areas where children's progress is less than expected. Staff consistently work with other professionals to adapt equipment, activities, and the environment, so that children with special educational needs and/or disabilities can explore activities more easily and reach their potential. For example, smaller group activities have been devised and implemented for specific children in line with their individual educational plans. As a result, staff support all children in making good progress. There are strong strategies in place to ease communication for some children with English as an additional language, such as the visual timetable. Parents are invited

into the sessions to play alongside their child and the key person is able to observe the communication and key words used with the child at home and then use this in the playgroup.

Most members of staff skilfully challenge and extend children's learning by asking open-ended questions that allow them to predict outcomes and stimulate further investigation. They provide children with plenty of time to think through their responses. For example, staff engage in children's play, following their lead as they build a rocket and then pretend to fly it to the moon. Children's imagination is promoted well and the use of skilful questioning throughout extends children's thinking and ideas further. On occasion, however, some opportune moments are missed to strengthen children's learning further. Some staff do not always use a wide range of teaching strategies, such as open-ended questions and modelling language to enrich children's learning and challenge them to explore their thinking and ideas. For example, at group time, children were asked questions about the weather but then not always given the time to develop their answers before being given the answer. Staff ensure that children are given lots of opportunities to use the school's facilities. For example, children use the apparatus in the large hall, to climb and increase their mobility and coordination. They also participate in a number of cooking activities in the food technology room within the school.

Flexible activity planning enables staff to meet children's individual needs and interests and ensure they are challenged. Children discover how to use the lever to pick up the bricks and transport them. They carefully use needles and follow simple instructions to help them learn to sew. Children develop various skills as they use the large apparatus in the hall. They patiently wait their turn and follow instructions from staff to climb and jump safely. Staff generally support them; some by using modelling language to describe their actions and showing them how to hold their arms out to help their balance. Staff support children in developing their early literacy skills, as children use their name cards to begin to recognise their name. Children choose books to look at and enjoy making up their own stories in response to the pictures. They are beginning to give their drawings meaning as they decide what they are going to draw beforehand. Consequently, children effectively develop the skills that prepare them for the next stage in their learning and their eventual move onto school.

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

Staff are effective in promoting children's emotional well-being and independence. They form appropriate bonds and secure emotional attachments with the children. The manager carefully considers each child's needs and the strengths of each member of staff in deciding which children have which key person. Staff obtain detailed information from parents about children's interests and care needs. This includes an All about me sheet and an All about your child sheet, so that both children and their parents have an input into the settling-in procedure. In addition, any other information from other agencies involved with the children is also gathered. Staff implement this information into the planning and daily care routine, enabling them to effectively meet the needs of individual children. Staff are good role models. They use gentle reminders and careful explanations to support children in understanding why some behaviour is unacceptable and what the possible

consequences might be. Staff use opportunities within the session to reinforce their understanding of safety. For example, when staff test the fire alarms, they ask children if they remember what they need to do if there is a fire.

Children are able to effectively manage their own personal needs relative to their age. Cooking activities and snack time enables children to make choices about what they would like to eat. The older children in the afternoon choose when they have snack to avoid disrupting their play. They serve themselves and pour their own drinks. Staff give clear messages to children to develop their understanding of why it is important to have a healthy diet. For example, children play 'doctors' at the role play area. Staff teach them about how healthy eating can make their patients better. Staff promote children's independence well. For example, they help children to secure the zip at the bottom of their coat and then encourage them to zip it up themselves. Children benefit from opportunities to run around and play outside on a daily basis as they have free access to a well-resourced outdoor area, where they climb, run and practise their physical skills with various equipment. They also regularly use the school hall for physical activities and ball games. Staff promote children's understanding of keeping healthy as they encourage children to cover their mouths when coughing and teach them to use tissues to wipe their noses.

Staff provide good support to prepare children for the transfer to nursery and school. For example, staff from the local schools visit the children in the setting, and bring in items, such as a uniform, book bag and photographs of other teaching staff in school. When possible, playgroup staff also walk children to some local schools to see the building they will be using. This supports children in making their move to school or nursery as seamless as possible. Key persons complete transition forms, which are given to staff in the new setting. They provide valuable information about individual children and where they are in their learning. As a result, children's emotional well-being is well supported so that they settle quickly within a new environment and develop relationships with new adults and peers with confidence.

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

Arrangements for safeguarding children are strong and well embedded. All staff have received basic safeguarding training. They regularly participate in discussion at staff meetings to ensure their understanding of the process to follow should they have any concerns about a child in their care. There are robust recruitment and induction procedures in place to ensure that all staff are suitable to work with children. Staff maintain comprehensive risk assessments and daily safety checks of each room ensure that the setting is safe and any hazards are removed or minimised. This contributes to children's enjoyment of their time at the setting by enabling them to play in a safe and secure environment. Staff implement a range of clear, detailed policies and procedures, which are available to parents.

The management has recruited a staff team who are well qualified and experienced. The manager works closely with the school and early years advisor in monitoring and

evaluating the setting's overall practice. The manager's thorough monitoring of staff performance means that their work is valued and they are supported well in developing their professional practice. She is able to identify particular staff strengths and also staff who use less effective teaching methods. Appraisals, ongoing supervision meetings and observations are used effectively to check on performance and review the training needs of each staff member. Therefore, staff generally support children effectively in making good progress towards the early learning goals. The manager's commitment to continuous improvement is strong. Staff regularly attend training and bring back their knowledge to use in the setting. For example, after attending training on developing literacy, staff inform and encourage parents to attend the story time at the local library. They are currently introducing a parents' library for children to share books at home. Highly effective monitoring of the planning and assessment of children's learning means that the management has an accurate view of the quality of teaching and how this has an impact on children's progress. They are able to identify where children are not making as much progress as they could be and know what needs to be done to improve this.

Staff have strong partnerships with parents and keep them well informed about the provision. For example, they have daily verbal exchanges with parents and share home/school communication books with them. Parents are fully involved in their child's learning from the start. They talk with staff about their child's progress and attend open mornings each term. Staff establish good links with other professionals in order to support children and their families. The children's centre staff visit regularly and there has been continuous involvement from speech and language therapists and physiotherapists to advise staff how they can further support those children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. For example, the strong partnership with the children's centre enables staff to work closely with parents and highlight support and training available to them. There are practical procedures in place for sharing information with other early years settings. Teachers from the various schools are invited to visit and meet the children in a play situation, look at their learning journal and talk to the key person. This ensures a shared understanding of children's individual needs can be developed. The views of others, including parents, are continually used to inform and develop action plans to improve the provision for children. For example, recent improvements include the review and reorganisation of group time. Staff recognise that two smaller groups benefit children, and enables children with challenging behaviour to engage and focus more on the activity. Current plans include working with the early years advisor to observe practice to aid the manager in supporting staff in their interactions with 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	EY273751
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	872765
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 5
Total number of places	26
Number of children on roll	47
Name of provider	Pilgrims Way Playgroup Committee
Date of previous inspection	05/03/2009
Telephone number	01438 369 519

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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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