

Strathmore Pre-School

Strathmore School, Old Hale Way, HITCHIN, Hertfordshire, SG5 1XR



Inspection date

8 July 2015

Previous inspection date

10 January 2012

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	Good	2
	Previous inspection:	Good	2
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		Good	2
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		Good	2
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		Good	2
The setting meets legal requirements for early years settings			

Summary of key findings for parents

This provision is good

- Partnerships with parents are effective and they speak highly of the established staff team. Parents are warmly welcomed and regularly encouraged to extend their child's learning at home. Staff provide good opportunities for parents to find out about the Early Years Foundation Stage. Staff share information about children's progress and achievements through informative learning profiles.
- The pre-school leader implements regular opportunities to identify strengths and possible training needs during staff supervision. Self-evaluation is effective because the staff team continuously monitor and evaluate the learning and development requirements. Consequently, they are able to identify and narrow gaps in children's learning.
- The pre-school leader and staff are vigilant about children's safety. They provide a secure environment and implement robust procedures, such as recruitment and induction to protect children.
- Children are developing strong bonds and attachments with staff and friends at pre-school. They are cared for in a warm, friendly and well-organised environment, where they are able to feel safe and secure. As a result, children are happy and settled.
- Children's speech and language development is good, including children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language.

It is not yet outstanding because:

- The assessment process does not include the tracking of the progress made by specific groups of children in order to clearly focus planning.
- On occasion, when children are grouped together, staff do not adapt activities to take greater account of children's different ages and stage of development.
- Children are not consistently reminded of the importance of caring for living things.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- refine the observation and assessment process, in order to sharpen the focus on the progress that specific groups of children make
- strengthen children's learning during small-group activities, for example, by adapting these so that children of all ages can engage effectively
- provide more opportunities for children to show care and concern for living things.

Inspection activities

- The inspector completed a joint observation with the pre-school leader as children listened to a story, and together they discussed children's play, learning and progress.
- The inspector looked at evidence of the suitability of staff members and a range of other documentation, including supervision, appraisal and policy documents.
- The inspector discussed how the leader monitors and evaluates the quality of teaching, and took account of the views of some parents spoken to during the inspection.
- The inspector observed children's play inside and outside, observed the pre-school snack and lunchtime routines and spoke with the staff and children at appropriate times throughout the inspection.

Inspector

Jo Rowley

Inspection findings

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend. This is good

Staff implement the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage very well. They plan a range of inviting activities, which link to children's interests and next steps in learning. The move on to school children make, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language, are well promoted. For example, they develop effective social skills and confidence as they take part in specific group activities, such as show and tell sessions. Their listening skills are fully encouraged, as spontaneous activities, such as a guess the sound game, are played regularly. However, on occasion during group activities staff do not adapt the activity effectively to ensure that it is matched to all children's ages and stage of development. As a result, some younger children become disengaged. Staff promote children's creativity very well. Children are happily engaged in the current summer role-play area where they pretend to splash in the swimming pool or sit in the shade at the beach.

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

Children's physical development is fully encouraged. There are ample opportunities for outside play with activities, such as writing, drawing and reading, equally promoted in the stimulating outside area. Furthermore, children explore different textures as they enjoy the feel of water and mud independently. Staff provide interesting activities for children to learn about the natural world, and exploit a spontaneous opportunity to find insects. However, they do not explain the importance of caring for living things. Children develop a good understanding of leading healthy lifestyles. They follow practical routines, discuss their snacks and lunches with staff and talk about what makes them grow big and strong.

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

Staff demonstrate a good knowledge and understanding of the safeguarding and welfare requirements. All staff have attended child protection training and the leader and deputy manager take the designated responsibility for dealing with child protection. Staff are aware of the signs and symptoms of abuse and the procedure to follow if they have concerns. The leader regularly observes the well-qualified staff team, and children, in order to monitor the quality of teaching. She uses feedback from these observations during regular staff meetings to evaluate and make plans for future improvements. Staff attend a variety of training to improve their knowledge and understanding and share this with the whole team to promote the overall quality of the setting. Children's learning journals are reviewed regularly and the tracking of their progress is well organised. However, the leader is not yet able to track the progress of specific groups of children to ensure that good progress is made throughout the pre-school. The pre-school staff have very good links with other early years settings and professionals. They work together to promote consistency of children's care and confidently share progress and achievements to support children in their move on to other settings.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY407633
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	850842
Type of provision	Full-time provision
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	2 - 5
Total number of places	20
Number of children on roll	37
Name of provider	Strathmore Pre-School
Date of previous inspection	10 January 2012
Telephone number	01462459558

Strathmore Pre-School was registered in 2010. The pre-school is situated in the grounds of Strathmore infant school and employs six members of childcare staff. Of these, five hold an appropriate early years qualification at level 3 or above. The pre-school opens Monday to Thursday, from 9am to 3pm and from 9am to 12 noon on a Friday, term time only. The pre-school supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language. The pre-school provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

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