

Pre School at St Albans

St. Albans RC Primary School, First Avenue, Harlow, Essex, CM20 2NP



Inspection date	27 January 2016
Previous inspection date	24 June 2015

	This inspection:	Good	2
The quality and standards of the early years provision			
	Previous inspection:	Requires Improvement	3
Effectiveness of the leadership and management		Good	2
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Good	2
Personal development, behaviour and welfare		Good	2
Outcomes for children		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents

This provision is good

- The provider and manager have successfully made significant improvements since the previous inspection. For example, the provider is fully aware of her responsibility to inform Ofsted of any changes to the pre-school. Staff now provide children with a wealth of opportunities outdoors to develop their mathematical learning.
- The effective key-person system enables staff to form warm and caring bonds with the children. This helps children to develop a strong sense of well-being. They are inquisitive and eagerly explore the spacious environment and rich range of high-quality toys and activities.
- Regular 'welly walks' around the grounds of the host school successfully promote children's understanding of the world. Children learn about changes in the environment and have immense fun jumping in puddles. Overall, children have very good opportunities to be physically active in the fresh air. They benefit from daily use of challenging equipment in the inviting outdoor areas.
- Children who speak English as an additional language are well supported. They enjoy daily fun activities with a bilingual member of staff. All staff consistently use simple sign language, a wealth of visual prompts and key words in children's home language in order to aid their understanding.

It is not yet outstanding because:

- On occasion, staff do not fully promote children's attention and listening skills during large-group activities.
- The initial information about children's learning that staff obtain from parents is not always precise enough to accurately identify children's immediate learning needs.

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 large-group activities, in order to better promote the development of children's listening and attention skills
- obtain more-detailed initial information from parents about children's development, in order to plan more precisely for their continued progress from the outset.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed the quality of teaching during activities indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact this has on children's learning.
- The inspector completed a joint observation with the manager and discussed this with her.
- The inspector held a meeting with the manager, a nursery teacher based within the host school and the provider. She looked at relevant documentation, such as the pre-school's self-evaluation.
- The inspector looked at evidence of the suitability of the provider, trustees and staff working in the pre-school.
- The inspector spoke to a small selection of parents during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The inspector spoke to staff and children when appropriate during the inspection.

Inspector

Lorraine Pike

Inspection findings

Effectiveness of the leadership and management is good

The dedicated provider and manager are positively supported by the well-qualified team of staff, who run the pre-school efficiently and with enthusiasm. The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The provider and all staff have a good understanding of safeguarding policies and procedures and are aware of their responsibilities in this respect. Robust plans are in place for the recruitment of staff and all are vetted to ensure that they are safe to care for children. Clear arrangements for staff supervision and opportunities for regular training help to promote good outcomes for children. The manager's attention to monitoring the educational programmes ensures that any gaps in children's learning are swiftly addressed. She uses self-evaluation well to maintain a high-quality provision. Partnerships with external agencies, such as the local children's centre are well established. This makes a good contribution to meeting the needs of children and their families. Strong links with the host, and other local schools, help to support children as they move on to school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

Overall, the quality of teaching is strong. Staff plan challenging activities that fully engage and interest children. This successfully supports children's development and motivation to learn. Sensitively planned activities help children to develop an increased awareness of their own and other children's families. Staff promote children's mathematical and creative skills well. Children use their imagination to create complex models, such as spectacles and flowers, from plastic tubes and shapes. They count how many children are present and practise writing numbers. Staff help children to explore how different art media can be used. Children use a range of fruits dipped in paint to create patterns. They begin to experiment and discover how new colours are created when they mix them together. Parents are very complimentary of the service that staff provide. They appreciate being regularly welcomed in to the pre-school to share experiences with their children. Staff provide them with a wealth of ideas to help support their children's learning at home.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare are good

Staff create a warm, welcoming atmosphere for all children and their families. Children demonstrate a real sense of responsibility for their environment. They use brooms to eagerly sweep up the sand they have been playing with. Staff ensure that children are well nourished and ready to learn as soon as they arrive. Children learn about a sustainable environment. They help to nurture fruit and vegetables in the pre-school garden. Staff encourage children's developing self-confidence and speaking skills. During group time, staff skilfully reshape their questions to encourage less-confident children to respond and speak out loud. However, the deployment of staff during some large-group times, such as registration, means that children's listening and attention skills are not effectively promoted. Some children become easily distracted and begin to distract others.

Outcomes for children are good

All children make good progress in relation to their starting points. They develop the key skills that they need in readiness for school, such as being independent.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY289249
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	1020784
Type of provision	Sessional provision
Day care type	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Registers	Early Years Register
Age range of children	3 - 4
Total number of places	15
Number of children on roll	29
Name of provider	Pre School at St.Albans
Date of previous inspection	24 June 2015
Telephone number	01279425383

Pre School at St Albans was registered in 2004 and runs in association with St Albans Roman Catholic Primary School. The pre-school employs four members of childcare staff, three of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 2 and above, including one with Qualified Teacher Status. The pre-school is open Monday to Friday during term time. Sessions are from 9am until 12 noon and from 12.20pm until 3.20pm. The pre-school provides funded early education for three- and four-year-old children. It supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

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