

Children 1st

St. Peter's School, Cottonmill Lane, ST. ALBANS, Hertfordshire, AL1 1HL



Inspection date	15 January 2018
Previous inspection date	25 February 2014

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	Good	2
	Previous inspection:	Good	2
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 manager and staff are well qualified and passionate in their commitment to provide a high-quality learning environment for children. They work extremely well together as a team and demonstrate strong practice.
- Staff skilfully encourage children's confidence and speaking skills. For example, they ask questions to help children think, and encourage them to contribute their ideas in small- group time. Children thoroughly enjoy re-enacting their favourite stories using resources related to the story.
- Staff are very good role models. They consistently reinforce rules and praise children who make good choices. This helps all children to have a clear understanding of behavioural expectations and boundaries, and promotes their confidence and self-esteem.
- Staff support children who speak English as an additional language very well. They make use of visual signs, books, posters and parent contributions to help all children to respect other languages and cultures.
- Partnerships with parents and carers are a strength of the pre-school. Staff get to know the children and their families very well. Parents are valued as equal partners, sharing the care of their children. As a result, individual children's care needs are met consistently and their achievements are celebrated.

It is not yet outstanding because:

- The supervision arrangements to monitor the quality of teaching and evaluate staff practice do not focus sufficiently on raising the quality of teaching to the highest levels.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- build on the current arrangements for the performance management of staff so that these focus more specifically on raising the quality of teaching to an outstanding level.

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 spoke with staff and children during the inspection.
- The inspector completed a joint observation with the manager.
- The inspector held a meeting with the manager. She looked at relevant documentation and evidence of the suitability of staff working in the setting.
- The inspector spoke to parents during the inspection and took account of their views.

Inspector

Jacqui Oliver

Inspection findings

Effectiveness of the leadership and management is good

The manager works closely with her well-motivated staff team and together they provide very good care and learning opportunities for the children. The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. All staff have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities in promoting children's welfare. Rigorous recruitment and vetting procedures, including ongoing suitability checks ensure staff are suitable to work with children. Children's absences are carefully monitored and staff promote good attendance. The manager monitors children's development and has an overview of the progress that each child makes. Staff work very closely with parents, school staff and other professionals to ensure all children's needs are effectively met. Parents speak very highly of the care and education their children receive.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

Staff have a very good knowledge of how young children learn. They plan interesting and stimulating activities and present them with exciting challenges throughout the afternoon. As a result, children are engaged and show good levels of concentration. Children enjoy looking at books and listening to their favourite stories. They practise their writing skills during role-play activities, such as in the pizza parlour. Children use their imaginations well, expressing themselves creatively as they make pretend ice creams with dough. Children benefit from exciting hands-on learning experiences, such as exploring the life cycle of butterflies and watching eggs hatch into chicks. Regular walks in the school grounds provide good opportunities for children to explore the world around them.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare are good

Children are warmly welcomed into this well-resourced pre-school where they can safely explore, indoors and outside. Children's physical development is promoted well as they balance, climb and use wheeled toys. Staff talk about the importance of safety and allow children to take supervised risks in their play. For example, staff support children as they climb and balance on equipment in the outdoor area. Staff emphasise the importance of healthy eating and use effective strategies to involve parents in supplying healthy lunchboxes for their children. Children learn good hygiene practices, including washing their hands.

Outcomes for children are good

Children of all abilities achieve well and thoroughly enjoy their time at the pre-school. They learn to be part of a group, understand rules and show respect for the feelings and choices of others. Older children are encouraged to learn early mathematical and literacy skills. For example, they confidently count objects, recognise numerals and use good mathematical language to describe shapes and sizes of objects around them. They link letters with the sounds they represent and make good attempts at writing their name. From an early age, children develop confidence and independence, preparing them well for school.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY279966
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	1101955
Type of provision	Sessional provision
Day care type	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Registers	Early Years Register
Age range of children	2 - 4
Total number of places	36
Number of children on roll	36
Name of registered person	Children 1st Partnership
Registered person unique reference number	RP523615
Date of previous inspection	25 February 2014
Telephone number	01727 853075

Children 1st registered in 2004. The pre-school employs six members of childcare staff. Of these, five hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 or above. Three staff, including the manager, hold a degree in early years. The pre-school opens Monday to Friday term time only. Sessions are from 1pm until 4pm with an optional lunch club from midday. The pre-school provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. The pre-school supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

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