

Inspection of Old London Road Pre-School

4th St Albans Scout Hut, Riverside Road, St Albans, Hertfordshire AL1 1ST

Inspection date: 16 March 2020

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
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The quality of education	Outstanding
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is outstanding

Each morning children are immediately spellbound and motivated by the musical welcome session, led by the manager. They happily say goodbye to their parents, demonstrating that they feel safe and secure. Children eagerly choose from a range of easily accessible activities. Young children explore play dough, which is rippled with beautiful colours. Older children make a green dough caterpillar and compare the number, size and shape of its body segments. Children pretend to take telephone calls in their role-play florist shop and prepare orders, using fresh flowers. They pot pansies in compost.

Children take delight in the magical atmosphere of the extensive garden which is filled with beautiful plants and trees. They make music on chiming hollow pipes or hanging pots and pans. They gleefully pretend to mow the lawn or work out how to empty and fill the ball pool. Older children help younger children play 'What's the time Mr Wolf?'. Children grow in confidence. Highly skilled and dedicated staff know when to stand back or offer support. Staff carefully think through every step of learning.

Behaviour is exemplary. Children listen attentively for their names, which signals their turn to use the washbasins, before going indoors. They sing 'Jimmy Germ' to help understand basic hygiene. Children explore emotions, reactions and consequences as staff read with them. For example, they enjoy learning about cheerfulness from a story about 'Me and my Mum'. Children learn about taking responsibility for their own and others' well-being.

What does the early years setting do well and what does it need to do better?

- The manager and staff have high expectations for children in their care. They make sure that all children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language, make exceptional progress.
- The manager and committee work closely together to ensure that staff are given sustained professional and emotional support. Staff appreciate 'down time' to reflect on their key children and share expertise and assessments. All staff know how to assist each child's learning and when to adjust teaching.
- Staff are deeply committed to giving children exceptionally good experiences. Staff plan inspirational activities, building on children's existing interests and abilities. For example, children engineer a crane with a tall arm that folds into a concertina stack. Children curiously explore how to move the crane when they keep the arm upright.
- Children learn how to make different sounds. Staff challenge them to explore how sound travels down tubes. They encourage children to listen carefully to all

sounds around them, however small. This helps children pick out sounds that letters represent in words. Staff expertly read books with children. All staff interactions are timely and pertinent.

- Staff help children develop mathematical skills exceptionally well. For example, while outside, children and a staff member take turns to roll a sponge number dice. Together they count and identify numbers on an abacus. The staff member expertly incorporates practical addition by adding more beads.
- Children make marks on easels. They knead and shape dough, safely using cutting tools. This helps children develop their pencil grip. They create designs, using felt tips on mugs for Mother's Day. They write their names on cards and gift tags.
- Children recycle materials and learn about sustainability. For example, they rebuild a tepee that was wrecked by a storm, using the original materials. They learn to be resilient and cope with adversity. Children learn about being different, as they use some basic sign language and explore using a book in braille.
- The whole staff team evaluates activities and practice to make improvements. For example, staff have introduced more lunch sittings, with smaller numbers, for a calmer atmosphere. Children can chat more easily with friends and staff. Training on effective questioning has helped staff to encourage children to be inquisitive and ask questions themselves. Children are confident speakers.
- Parents are unanimous in praise and gratitude for the way staff work with children and families. Parents say communication is 'excellent, timely and nothing is left unresolved'. One parent comments that 'you couldn't ask for more support, more expert advice and more fun'. All parents speak highly about the rich outdoor area, which is at the centre of the manager's vision.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are extremely well trained and knowledgeable about their roles and responsibilities relating to child protection issues. They know and understand signs of possible child abuse or being drawn into extreme behaviours or ideas. Staff have a clear understanding of how to report concerns about a child's welfare. Robust vetting procedures and ongoing checks ensure staff are suitable to work with children. All activities and routines are risk assessed to ensure children are safe. For example, there are stringent assessments for visits out of the premises and for people visiting the pre-school.

Setting details

Unique reference number	123649
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10127313
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Day care type	Sessional day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	2 to 4
Total number of places	32
Number of children on roll	69
Name of registered person	Old London Road Pre-School
Registered person unique reference number	RP519038
Telephone number	01727 865 249
Date of previous inspection	10 March 2015

Information about this early years setting

Old London Road Pre-School registered in 1999. It is located in St Albans, Hertfordshire. The pre-school is open term times only, on Monday to Friday from 9.15am to 3pm. Morning sessions are from 9.15am to 12noon and afternoon sessions are from 12.15pm to 3pm. Lunch club is from 12noon to 12.30pm. The pre-school provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. The pre-school employs 16 members of staff, most of whom hold a level 2 or 3 qualification in childcare. The manager has early years professional status.

Information about this inspection

Inspector
Liz Kissane

Inspection activities

- Ofsted is aware of the challenges that Covid-19 is currently posing to those we inspect. During this visit, the inspectors took into consideration the impact of any measures being taken to slow the spread of Coronavirus by the setting. This has included the effect these measures have had on the current attendance of the children and staffing arrangements.
- The inspector spoke to the manager about how she organises the early years provision and curriculum.
- The inspector observed the quality of teaching, during activities indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact this has on children's learning.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation of an activity with the manager.
- At appropriate times throughout the inspection, the inspector held meetings with the manager and senior leaders, and spoke with staff and children.
- The inspector spoke with a visiting member of the local authority's inclusion team.
- The inspector looked at a range of documents and checked evidence of suitability and qualifications of staff working within the pre-school. She discussed the pre-school's self-evaluation.
- The inspector spoke to a selection of parents, considered written testimonials from other parents and took account of their views.

We carried out this inspection 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.

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