

Inspection of St Albans Pre School

Edward Eccles Hall, Front Street, Earsdon, Whitley Bay, Northumberland NE25 9LP

Inspection date: 20 October 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not applicable

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

The pre-school has close links with the local community. Children visit horses at the nearby farm and tend to vegetables at an allotment. The group take part in local events, such as to design and make scarecrows to display in the village. This helps children to develop a sense of belonging in their community and to learn about the world around them.

Staff provide a stimulating environment, which is set up each day. Children are keen to join in challenging activities that are carefully planned to support their learning. They make good overall progress in all areas of development. Children have good listening and attention skills. They listen intently at story time, joining in with familiar parts and guessing what might happen next. Children concentrate very well as they add icing to biscuits that they decorate for Halloween. Toddlers are curious. They squeeze and roll dough in their hands. Staff help to prepare children for later learning in school. They teach them about letters and numbers in an age-appropriate way. Children learn to count and practise early writing in their diaries.

Staff are kind and caring. Children benefit from plenty of praise and attention that helps them to feel safe and valued.

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

- Staff observe children at play and accurately assess their development. This helps them to provide a good overall range of activities that are matched to children's needs and help them to develop their skills and knowledge. Staff take account of children's interests and preferences, which helps to motivate children to learn.
- The manager has introduced a new curriculum approach to encourage children's curiosity and exploration during play. However, this is not yet fully understood or implemented consistently by staff. Activities for older children are, at times, heavily directed by staff. Opportunities to explore and investigate are interrupted by whole-group activities. For example, children who show an interest in playing in the water tray must stop to go outside when directed by staff.
- Children have a good understanding of early mathematics. They enjoy number rhymes and songs, and they count and compare the shape of biscuits. Staff support this well. For example, they challenge children to calculate 'one more' and 'one less' during games.
- Staff appreciate good support from the manager and their morale is high. They are keen to learn and are developing even more confidence in their role. Regular support and coaching help them to build on their skills and knowledge, which helps to build on the good quality of teaching.

- The manager has formed highly effective partnerships with other settings that children attend. Educational plans are closely aligned, and staff share information about their aims for children's learning. This helps to provide a consistent and familiar approach to teaching and contributes to how well children remember their new skills and knowledge.
- Parents speak highly about staff. They appreciate their good communication, for example, through regular newsletters. They feel that their children are supported well, and particularly like that children spend a lot of time outdoors.
- Children benefit from fresh air and exercise. They go for walks to the local church and spend time in the garden, playing games such as 'What time is it Mr Wolf'. However, babies' opportunities for physical development are limited indoors. At times, the area available for their play is small and overfilled with toys.
- There is a relaxed and calm atmosphere in the pre-school. Staff model positive behaviours, such as good manners and being patient. Children are polite and behave very well. Staff are keen to teach children about cultures, traditions and values in their own community and beyond. This helps children to respect others and to value what makes them unique.
- Staff have high aspirations for children. They encourage them to be independent in preparation for managing their own needs when they move on to school. Children wash their hands and put on their coats by themselves. They enjoy the responsibility of helping to lay the table for lunch.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The manager understands her responsibilities to safeguard children. She and staff know how to identify children who may be at risk from harm or abuse. They know how to share their concerns to get children and families the help that they need. The premises are safe and secure. Regular checks help to ensure that activities and toys are safe and appropriate for children's use. Staff are deployed effectively to ensure that children are supervised well. The manager ensures that there is always a member of staff present who holds a paediatric first-aid qualification to manage accidents appropriately.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- increase the space and opportunities that babies have to move in different ways to support their physical development even more consistently
- provide pre-school children with more opportunities for independent play to explore, investigate and lead their own learning.

Setting details

Unique reference number	2576252
Local authority	North Tyneside
Inspection number	10209338
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	0 to 4
Total number of places	56
Number of children on roll	28
Name of registered person	Egan, Michelle
Registered person unique reference number	2576251
Telephone number	07377185442
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

St Alban's Pre School registered in 2020 and is situated in Earsdon, Whitley Bay. The pre-school employs six members of childcare staff, of whom five hold early years qualifications at level 3 or above. The pre-school opens Monday, Tuesday and Thursday from 8am to 4pm, all year round. It is closed on bank holidays. The pre-school provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector
Clare Wilkins

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the setting received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and staff and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the setting.
- The manager showed the inspector around the pre-school and talked about the curriculum.
- The inspector observed the quality of education and assessed the impact this has on children's learning.
- The manager and inspector discussed the leadership and management of the setting. The inspector looked at relevant documents provided, including evidence of the suitability checks carried out on staff.
- The inspector completed a joint observation with the manager.
- The inspector spoke to staff and children at appropriate times during the inspection. She also spoke to a number of 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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