

Inspection of St Lawrence Church Pre-School

Hillhouse C of E Primary School, Ninefields, Waltham Abbey, Essex EN9 3EL

Inspection date:

7 December 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Good

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Staff provide a safe and secure environment for children. Staff have created strong bonds with children and provide the care and reassurance that children need to thrive. Managers and staff have designed an ambitious curriculum, which supports children's development well. Children enjoy playing with water, sand and dough. They explore water and ice. They understand that ice is frozen water and that when ice melts, it becomes water again. Children try to use different tools to break the ice to find the hidden toy animals inside. They experiment with different ways to break the ice before deciding to try melting it in warm water.

Staff teach children to listen carefully to each other and consider the interests and feelings of others during conversations and play. Behaviour in the pre-school is very good. Children enjoy regular outdoor play, where they can develop their physical skills. For example, they use bikes and climbing apparatus. This helps to strengthen children's balance, movement and coordination. Staff support children to develop good health and well-being. They offer healthy snacks and encourage parents to provide children with healthy packed lunches. Children learn to manage their self-care needs on their own. For example, they use the toilet themselves and learn to dress for outdoor play. Children have good opportunities to be independent.

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

- Staff plan their curriculum around children's interests and what they need to learn next. Overall, staff plan activities well. For example, they introduce children to new experiences, such as the opportunity to use their fine muscle skills to mix icing sugar and water when icing biscuits, and they use musical instruments during a singing activity. However, at times, staff do not consistently challenge all children's learning to build on what they know and can already do.
- Managers actively seek and embrace the views of parents, staff and children to continually enhance the quality of provision. Staff provide good support and guidance to parents, such as parenting advice and ideas about how they can help to promote their child's learning at home.
- Staff ensure that all children are exposed to a language-rich environment to support their speech and language. Children access inviting and stimulating book areas and staff use props to support storytelling. Staff repeat words and sing popular songs to help to extend children's vocabulary. Older children hold conversations, ask questions and describe objects.
- Staff support children's understanding of mathematics with opportunities to count and talk about shapes. However, they do not consistently teach mathematical concepts, such as quantity and size, to provide a wider range of mathematical experiences.
- Staff create an inclusive environment. They help children to value their

similarities and differences. For example, children learn about different festivals that their peers celebrate. Staff gather key words for children who speak English as an additional language. Using these helps children to feel secure from the start. Staff help children to learn about how to control their emotions. They talk about how they feel and what makes them happy and sad.

- The managers take the happiness and well-being of staff members seriously. They use supervision sessions to talk about staff's well-being and identify training that is specific to individual staff member's needs. They recognise the importance of keeping staff's professional development up to date. Staff comment on the strong relationships they have and feel well supported by the managers.
- Managers ensure that children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported effectively to make good progress. Staff are quick to identify children who are not at their expected levels of development. They make swift referrals and work in partnership with other professionals to target plans for those children who need them.
- Children's behaviour is good. For example, staff use visual timetables and picture cards to help children to identify their feelings and regulate their behaviour. This helps children to manage daily routines, such as transition times.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The manager and staff have a good understanding of their responsibilities to safeguard children. They know how to identify signs that may indicate a child is at risk of harm. Staff know what to do if they have a concern about children's welfare, and can confidently discuss whistle-blowing procedures. Staff talk to children about staying safe and are close by to provide support when necessary. For example, when children play in the garden, they are reminded that the bicycles are not to go over the yellow stop sign that is painted on the floor. Children respectfully wait for the sand timer to finish before they take their turn.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- support staff to challenge and extend children's learning, to help them to achieve as much as they can
- embed the teaching of mathematical skills to make greater use of measurement and quantity within the children's play experiences.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY218787
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10295223
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register
Day care type	Sessional day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	2 to 4
Total number of places	20
Number of children on roll	25
Name of registered person	St Lawrence Church Pre-School Committee
Registered person unique reference number	RP909312
Telephone number	01992 719594
Date of previous inspection	13 December 2017

Information about this early years setting

St Lawrence Church Pre-School registered in 2002. The pre-school employs five members of childcare staff. All staff hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3. The pre-school opens from Monday to Friday during term time only. Sessions are from 8.45am until 11.45am. The pre-school offers afternoon sessions on Tuesdays and Thursdays from midday until 3pm. The setting provides funded early education for three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Tina Mason

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the pre-school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the manager and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the pre-school.
- The inspector held discussions with the managers and staff of the pre-school about the design of the curriculum and how it is being implemented.
- Staff and children spoke to the inspector during the inspection. The inspector took account of the views of parents through verbal and written feedback provided.
- The inspector reviewed relevant documentation, including the suitability checks of all adults working in the pre-school.
- The inspector observed play and learning opportunities for children and undertook a joint observation of an activity with the pre-school manager.

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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