

Inspection of St Paul's Walden Nursery

St. Pauls Walden Junior School, Bendish Lane, Whitwell, Hitchin, Hertfordshire SG4 8HX

Inspection date: 21 October 2024

Overall effectiveness **Good**

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 create a safe and welcoming environment for children. They know that children need to feel happy and secure to thrive. Children's emotional well-being is prioritised. Staff offer families home visits before they join the nursery and tailored settling-in sessions. This helps children to build secure attachments with them, and children swiftly settle. They show that they feel at ease, are confident and keen to learn. Staff plan engaging learning experiences that support children's interests. This child-centred approach helps all children to make good progress in their learning. For example, the rich range of creative materials and staff's positive interactions motivate children to draw pictures of bats and pumpkins. Children add intricate details, such as stars, and are keen to share their achievements with the inspector and staff.

Staff are positive role models. They consistently use good manners when speaking with each other and the children. This motivates children to do the same. Children are active problem solvers. Through trial and error, they discover that they need to compress the sand in their bucket before flipping it over to help the sand hold a shape. Children benefit from outings in the community, which help them to learn about the wider world. Staff intuitively build on children's experiences, such as recent visits to see a doctor through their imaginative play. Children proudly share their achievements from home with their friends, such as demonstrating how to assemble the parts of a trumpet and produce a sound. This helps to enhance children's self-esteem.

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

- The support for children's language and communication skills is a real strength. Staff consistently speak to children clearly and ask meaningful questions while they play. For example, as children explore the different parts of a real sunflower, staff ask them how it feels. This motivates children to use words such as 'sticky' and 'furry'. Staff regularly sing to children and understand the importance of introducing them to rhythm. This encourages children to join in with the words and actions to songs. Additionally, staff frequently use simple sign language. This helps all children to express their thoughts and ideas.
- Leaders have created an ambitious curriculum that supports children to develop a diverse range of skills and knowledge in readiness for school. An overarching theme is to support children's interests and implement engaging activities effectively. Staff collect some important information from parents to understand children's preferences and needs. They also use their initial observations to assess what children already know and can do. However, they have not yet explored gathering more detailed information from parents to precisely inform early planning or provide parents with ideas to support children's continuity of

learning at home.

- Staff promote healthy lifestyles for children effectively. They provide nutritious snacks and teach children to manage their personal care and hygiene. Children learn that there are lots of fun ways to be physically active. They thoroughly enjoy exploring the inviting outdoor area, particularly the sensory wagon. Children rise to the challenge of pedalling their vehicles backwards and forwards and persevere to stay within the designated area.
- Staff work closely with parents and other professionals to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Children make the best possible progress from their starting points. Any additional funding the setting receives is used well to support children's individual needs.
- Staff use group times to share the nursery's golden rules with children, such as walking indoors and using 'kind hands'. During their interactions with children, they remind them to be gentle and respectful of toy animals, which helps them to learn how to treat real animals appropriately. However, there are occasions when children do not follow staff's clear instructions. This is particularly evident during routine activities, such as washing their hands or lining up outdoors when it is time to return indoors. This means that effective strategies to support all children to understand what is expected of them are not in place.
- Parents are kept informed of their children's achievements. They are warmly invited into the nursery to attend stay-and-play sessions with their children. Parents comment how their children are eager to attend and describe the staff as 'friendly' and that they provide a 'nurturing and vibrant' environment.
- The leaders work in very close partnership and have a clear oversight of the nursery. They are highly reflective of the provision they provide and ensure that staff well-being is a priority. Staff receive a varied range of opportunities to continue to develop their knowledge and skills. They share what they learn with the whole staff team to support a consistent approach.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts children's interests first.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- extend the information gathered from parents when children first start to inform children's unique next steps in learning from the outset and provide ideas to aid learning at home
- develop effective strategies to help children to understand the behavioural expectations in place.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY293964
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10359722
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	2 to 4
Total number of places	26
Number of children on roll	18
Name of registered person	St Paul's Walden Pre-School Limited
Registered person unique reference number	RP525010
Telephone number	01438 871166 or 07748 170675
Date of previous inspection	10 December 2018

Information about this early years setting

St. Paul's Walden Nursery registered in 2004 and is independently run. The nursery is open from 9am until 3pm, Monday to Friday, term time only. There are five staff members who work directly with the children, of whom four hold relevant childcare qualifications at level 2 or above. The nursery provides funded early education for two- and three-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Lorraine Pike

Inspection activities

- The manager and inspector completed a learning walk across all the areas of the setting to understand how the curriculum is organised.
- A joint observation of an activity was carried out by the inspector and the manager. The inspector observed the quality of teaching during activities indoors and outdoors. She assessed the impact this has on children's learning.
- The inspector held a number of discussions with staff and children at appropriate times during the inspection.
- The inspector held a meeting with the manager and provider. She looked at relevant documentation, such as evidence of the suitability of staff working in the setting and committee members.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents spoken to on the day and their written feedback.

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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